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**The dangers of time travel**

by Alexasnow

Summary

Alicia is living a life lone dream, she will be the first to live history, rather than read about it, but when things go wrong for Alicia, will her presence, and actions have long reaching consequences, when she falls into the hands of dangerous men.

Notes

mild form of torture within this chapter, do not read if this may trigger you
Falling into dangerous hands

I thought time travel would be exciting, I had found the concept intriguing, and one of my closest friends was one of the scientists involved in the project, he got an in, and when I passed the clearance, I was ecstatic, I could believe it; these were the things dreams were made of. I would get to be an impartial observer to days gone by, instead of reading history, I would live it, remaining unseen, as not to effect history to any great degree.

The first day of the project, I was nervous, what to wear was one question that plagued my mind, but I was told they would not send me back to far on the first attempt, so I wore plane black trousers, and a plain white shirt, and my favourite comfy knee boots. Tying my long hair back, and rolling up my sleeves always gave me the sense I was about to do something, and this time it was something monumental, I would be the first.

It being 2405 I wondered how far back they would send me, a few years, or a few hundred, I stepped into the chamber that I had acclimatized to by now, they told me that the first step back in time would be disorienting, and despite my training, I needed to be aware of such things. I was alive with anticipation, they hadn’t told me where I was going yet, and I was nervous, and curious, I could hear the count down, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and in a flash of light I was gone.

As the light faded from the surrounding area, I looked around me, this was not a few years, there was of been a glitch of some kind, as I was in what I could only assume to be ancient Rome. I had always found the roman culture intriguing, the architecture, and the developments they brought forth. I could not be seen as I walked passed roman men and women, they paid me no heed; it had worked, and better yet taken me to one of my favorite eras.

I was walking round the Colosseum; I passed the senate, and could not resist the urge to listen in upon the proceedings, it was sad to see that when it came to politics the world had not changed much. It was interesting to be invisible, and hear the unadulterated version of historical facts. When they announced the arrival of Mark Antony, I stood so I could get a better view. A strange loud screeching sound rang in my ear, forcing me to hold to the side of my head “What was that?”

Cole was hard to hear over the growing static, but all I heard worried me, for both him, and myself “We are losing power…..going to try and get…..you back”

Then the communiqué went dead, I was stuck, I waited for the communications to return, after hours, there was still nothing, and worse still, a man cried out next to me, I couldn’t understand him, I only knew he was pointing directly at me, guards closing in upon my location, the visual field was down, as they drew closer I thought I was done for, but the shield around me was still active for now, they yelled and screamed as their attacks were repelled. So for the time being I was safe, well they couldn’t hurt me, my translator finally kicked in. “Who are you?, and why are you here?” Mark Antony barked, he must of asked me the question so many times that he grew frustrated with what appeared to be ignorance.

“My name is Alicia, I mean you no harm”

“Why do you barge in to private proceedings unannounced?” He snapped.

“I was unaware, I will leave you in peace” I lied, but I had to leave, I began to back away, my eyes fixed upon the guards who continued to follow me, a hand reached out gripping my wrist, now I was in trouble, if they could touch me they could hurt me, I was doing untold damage to the future.

Mark Antony threw me into the arms of his guards “We will take her to the prison, and there we will find out one way or another who, and what you are” he declared triumphantly. They dragged me along, kicking and screaming, until they threw me into a cell, they looked down upon me, with a mix of contempt and pity. I paced my cell, hoping to hear some word, I began to worry for Cole, I hoped nothing had happened to him, my mind began to play out the worst scenarios as I waited impatiently, praying, and hoping to hear something. I grew weary as time drew out before me, I found my eyes heavy despite my unfamiliar surroundings, and genuine fears I must have dozed off, I have no idea how.

When closed my eyes I was in a cell when I opened them I was in a forest, I hoped I was home. Dusting myself off, I looked around, nothing looked remotely familiar, so the hope I had felt upon waking slowly began to fade. As I began to move forward, I heard a rustling in front of me.

I held my breath praying it wasn't a dangerous animal, I wasn't far wrong a man broke through the brush, scruffy greased mop of hair was the first thing I saw, his face in the shadow as he exclaimed “what do we have here?”

The only saving grace was I could understand him, but as he seized my arm, I felt his grip, my field was gone, he dragged me out in to the light, it was blinding at first but as my eyes adjusted I could see his clothes were military, possibly revolutionary, I tried to quickly recall all I could about this time period but my fear was making it a struggle.

“What are you shouting about Charles?” A smooth voice stated.

Another less imposing figure of a man stepped forward, his stature made him appear to be the man in charge, he approached me, looking down, his eyes surprisingly gentle, and his face was not as frightening to behold like his comrades, his lightly tanned skin, and prominent jaw, I would have thought him handsome had I not been fearing for my life.

“Out with it, who are you and why are you here?” He demanded.
I was unsure what to tell him, but no matter what I told him I risked changing things, I was aware of the risks but I also wanted to live. "I am English, and I have no idea how I got here" I answered honestly, but vaguely. His eyes narrowed "You sound English but your accent is strange, where in England are you from?" He pressed.

I had to think, was all the same in this time, I was struggling to think, so I blurted out "a small town a distance from the capital" I couldn't be more vague, and he picked up upon this "not forth coming with the facts are you, will you give me your name at least?" He probed. "Alicia" I answered honestly once more. "At least your willing to give some detail, that's an unusual name"

"Who am I talking to?" I responded without thinking.

"Is this how you address men in where you’re from, such a disrespectful manner but I will answer never the less, Master Haytham Kenway to you"

The name brought nothing to mind, he gripped the back of my neck "understand you are only still breathing for two reasons, firstly you may be of some use to me, how I have decided yet" he mused. I felt a sinking sensation, and then he continued "and you’re an attractive woman, so at the very least I will be able to trade you, you will fetch a good sum should you cease to be of use" He spoke of me like I was commodity, and like I had agreed to go with him. But it was not like I would have a choice in the matter; his statements were matter of fact not questions.

The moment he released my neck, and his comrade loosened his grip, I pulled away, and ran aimlessly away, not knowing where I was going, a loud bang rooted me to the spot. "That was a warning shot, I will not fire two" he barked, his calm demeanor slipping.

I turned back to face him, his comrade had his gun pointed at me, he was tearing over, seizing my arm "I was trying to be gentle miss, but if you insist upon this stupidity, I shall use force" He roughly dragged my arms back, binding them together, forcing me toward his horse, he mounted gracefully, dragging me up in front of him so he could keep an eye upon me.

I felt uncomfortable to be so close to him, but he was not interested in my feelings, I had caused him trouble. He began to gallop at speed toward a small town, he dragged me into a building, not a soul questioned him a bound woman in tow. Pushing me ahead of him up the stairs, he forced me down into a wooden chair. Him and his Colleagues began talking as if I wasn't there, I was privy to their plans but they did not know that being from 2405 that I knew how things would turn out for them, but I would not aid them in their madness, they saw as divine right.

“We shall find out what the British are up to, a group of generals is meeting by the old ruins, capture them, and bring them to our warehouse, our little English rose here can reason with them”

I did not feel the need to be a part of their plans, I had done enough by being here, I did not wish to interfere with the course of history any further, but once more it was not my choice, I was not a trained fighter, I could take one person at a stretch, but all three would not be possible, and bound, for me that made it impossible.

They pulled themselves up, Haytham dragging me back down the stairs, out into the street once more, and again it was as if I was invisible, people purposely looked away from me, the ground seemed to be fascinating to all passers-by, I felt annoyed by their fear, but begrudgingly understood it, it made it no easier to deal with. After walking for what felt like hours, he pushed me inside a building, were three generals were bound; now I have no great love for oppressors no matter their race, or ethnicity, but I did feel like traitor on the opposing side of my countrymen.

“Now get them to talk” he ordered.

I tried to get them to talk, as I was all to aware of the methods Haytham was more than happy to employ, he looked down at me, as the final man turned from me, calling me a traitor, the words stung.

As I pulled up, I pleaded once more, warning them of his cruel intent, but they would not hear of it, they focused upon me helping the enemy, I began to feel disgusted in myself.

Unbinding my hands, grabbing hold of me before I had the chance to run, he gripped my arms, forcing a pistol into my shaking hand, he forced me to aim at the poor man’s head, I could see he was not ready to die, he prompt told us everything, I felt a sense of relief, it was short lived, as the two either side of his throats were cut. I tried to turn away, he held me in place, I dropped my eyes, I had no wish to see this brutal bloodbath, nor did I wish to be part of it.

“Kill him” he whispered into my ear.

I remained rigid, he dragged my arms up, the gun once again pointed at his head he repeated his command “prove your worth to me, end him, or I will see him suffer” I could not look up, I could hear him whimpering, it filled me with guilt, my tears stung my eyes, I felt for this poor man, his fear was palatable.

“Fine, Charles remove his fingers, one, by one”

I did not look up until the yowls of agony startled me, I looked him in the eye, he was pleading with me to save him, but I did not have the skill, or strength to do so, I did not know how. As his tears followed amid his pained screams, I could no longer hear him suffer, I pulled the trigger, after the shot sounded, silence fell, I dropped the smoking pistol, horrified that I had just pulled the trigger.

“Good girl” he whispered.
He released me, I crumpled to the ground sobbing, that poor innocent man, he had begged for his life, they were deaf to his pleas, his pain did not move nor shock them, nor did the violence revolt them, as it did me, I was a wash with grief, and pain, stopping mid sob as something snapped within me, turning to rage. I turned to face Haytham, charging at him, he saw me coming, tripping me, pinning me down, as I continued to rage, he was startled when I head butted him, it hurt my head, but the look of pain, and shock upon his face was worth it, it satisfied me greatly, he kept himself at a safer distance “Stop this madness, it is done, and you are not strong enough to take me down, so calm yourself least I be forced to render you unconscious, and after that little act of defiance I would be more than happy to oblige”

I should have backed down, but I was so angry I found I couldn’t control my rage, I slipped an arm free, elbowing the side of his head, he growled, I didn’t even see his fist coming, but everything went black, but not before the white hot pain shot across the side of my face.
Further into the madness

Chapter Summary

Alicia finds herself dragged deeper into Haytham's world, his plans and plots

As I stirred, the first thing I felt was the throbbing in my jaw, I groaned in pain, but that only made things worse, I cradled my jaw, sitting up, in a darkened room. I pulled up to my feet, and began feeling around in the dark, I found the door handle, it wouldn't budge, I was locked in, I rammed my shoulder to the door, it was a feeble attempt "let me out, god damn it" I shouted as loud as I could manage.

I hissed as the dull ache became a sharp stabbing pain with each movement of my jaw. I slammed my hands harshly against the wood, finally hearing the lock click open. I pushed the door open slowly, Haytham stood with his arms folded, light bruising scattered across his nose, and forehead, I had caused that and I was glad of it, I couldn't help but smirk, despite the pain it caused me.

"Wondering when you would get up, I would find your handiwork too amusing" he warned.

I failed to heed his warning, so he grabbed hold of my chin, pressing his fingers to my jaw, my eyes rolled in the back of my head, tears picked my eyes, I wept as he held my jaw firmly, I pulled at his arm, it would not budge, he released me when he was satisfied I had learnt my lesson.

"I have no idea what your attire is but it is not fitting of Templar, I will find you more appropriate clothing"

"I do not wish to look like one of you, or be one of you for that matter" I muttered defiantly.

He reached out his hand, I stepped back holding up my hands "Fine, I will wear whatever you provide" I conceded, hating myself for backing down so swiftly.

"Was that so difficult?" He teased.

It was, more than he knew, I could not stand to be around him, he had lead me to an awful action. I had been the one who pulled the trigger, I would have to suffer that shame, and guilt for the rest of my life, however long it would be, but my rage toward him was justified, I did not wish to be a part of these proceedings.

Still nothing from Cole, I was starting to think something had befallen the lab, too many would see time travel as an opportunity to seize more power, the uncertainty of it all was too much to bear. We had been so careful, so secretive, we spoke in code, we thought we were safe, safe to go forward, we could not have been more wrong. "I hope you're OK Cole" I whispered to the air.

"Who is Cole?" Haytham asked, I had forgotten his presence, as I allowed myself to get lost in my worries.

"A friend" I responded curtly.

"Where is he now?" He probed.

"Far away, I may never see them again" I said wistfully.

"I won't pretend to care of your troubles; I let my curiosity get the better of me" he apologized.

It was a harsh, and cutting statement, but he was my captor, not my friend. I was made to re-join his ragtag group of bandits, and thugs. He did not seem alike to the company he kept, observing the way he spoke of his convictions, stood him apart, he was very articulate, and his dry humor, made him less of choric to listen to. The others were coarser in their language, which was not what bothered me; they seemed to have their own twisted agendas, despite his tunnel vision Haytham thought he was doing something for a greater goal, whereas the others seemed concerned with self-interest.

When Haytham passed me a bundle of clothes, he told me to put them on; I had to blend in for this mission. He followed me up, and guided me into his room, walking out and closing the door, I was curious to see if he was close by, I could only imagine escape to be my safest option. The door betrayed me, as it protested, creaking loudly, he rounded the corner, scowling at me "How foolish do you think me, I would not leave you unattended my dear, now time is of the essence, change or I will do it for you"

He pointed back toward the room, my eyes wide, I turned back toward the room, feeling a sense of defeat, I tried the windows, all locked, and glass smashing would alert him, but I had to try, I smashed the window clean open, and before I was able to even look outside, I felt his arms around my waist "Calm yourself or I will let you see how far you would have gotten"

I continued to struggle “Fine” he snapped.

He gripped my neck, and forced me forward, my toes barely holding to the ground, I was higher up than I realized, I gasped, looking down at the ground, the blood rushing through my ears, muffling his words. The scene was gone as fast as it appeared as he threw me back across the
floor, my heart pounding heavily in my chest, shaking as the adrenaline coursing through me was now of no use, I was shaken.

He grasped my wrist throwing me to the bed “Now change, or we can see if the English can fly” he hissed, storming out of the room, remaining outside the door this time, I struggled to pull myself up, my legs wobbled. I struggled to unbutton my shirt as my hands would not cease their infernal shaking, no matter how I reasoned that I was now safe, my body was yet to be convinced, as was I, safe may have been the wrong term, I still lived was the only way to describe it.

I pulled the trousers over my trembling legs, they were too big, as was the shirt, the coat I managed to pull tight enough to make it presentable, I tore my white shirt as a modicum of strength returned to me, using the extra material to hold the trousers in place, pulling my boots over them, I truly looked like a traitor now, and I felt like one, I did not agree with my country men’s actions, but this open defiance felt strangely shameful.

I tried to open the door, but there was a weight upon it, I tried again, the door flew open forcing me to stagger forward “Now you will blend rather nicely, a bit big upon your frame, but better your gender be disguised, as we need to remain unseen” I had no wish to follow upon another the mission, I knew things could only get worse, I was about to keep walking when he grabbed my arm, pulling me back, he looked at me intently remarking “Hmmm”

He brushed my hair free of my face, startled by how tender, and gentle his touch was as he swept my hair back, tying it with string “Better, that may have given you away”

I walked slowly down the stairs, I almost walked into Charles, who stood defiantly in my path, a scowl etched into his cruel face. As Haytham left my side to greet new arrivals, Charles stepped closer in an intimidating manner, he leaned forward and in a harsh but hushed tone he stated “You may look like one of us, but you are not, your kind are a menace, and you should be punished”

I did not know how to respond within causing more trouble; thankfully Haytham saved me the trouble, by walking over “What seems to the problem?” “No problem Haytham, none at all”

Charles walked away, but he cast hateful glances back at me. I turned my attention to my captor “Now I will introduce you to the additions to our party, we need to rescue, a friend of ours from the hands of the English, they captured him, and we intend to enter the fort, and you will be our way in”

“Me?” I stated in disbelief.

“Yes you, you needed say or do anything, in fact silence would be preferable” he gave a wry smile, before he pulled me toward the new people in the room, or at least the people I had not had an acknowledgement, asking no questions of me, or my name in turn, I wondered if it was because he had been asked not to, or didn’t care to know, either way I was dragged to the next man before taking measure of the first “And the infamous Thomas Hickey”

He mock bowed, he was one of the ones I had heard talking earlier, relaying stories of his adventures, bragging of the men he had killed, and the women he had taken to bed, I felt ill at ease in his company, as alike Charles he gave me the same frosty reception, I understood that they saw me as the enemy, but never the less their hatred was misplaced.

“Come gentlemen, we have not got time to wait, let us venture to Southgate, and free our lost brother, spare him the indignity of death at the hands of those British dogs” I felt myself wince at the harsh terminology, although deserved in such measure, I felt offended, and did not care for the cheers that followed.

As we left, this fort was not close by to their base of operations, we had to travel upon horseback, near to the outskirts of this town, still unaware of where we were. The horse ride was long, and uncomfortable, as I was forced to dismount, the other three disappeared returning with British uniforms stained with the blood of their former owners, they quickly changed, Haytham holding to the rope that bound my hands behind my back, Haytham pushing his hat over my head, then pushing me forward. I was told to hang my head, so I could only hear their words, and see their shoes.

“What is this?”

“We caught this rebel intending to break into this fort here” his accent was flawless, very believable, and his words were ironic given our plans. I felt the urge to warn the guards at the gate, I tried raising my head, but it was forced down, then a crack of on elbow to my head forced me to remain that way, as by the time the dizziness had passed the guards had already allowed us inside. I was taken into British custody, and for a moment I thought I may escape them, however chance saw to it that freedom would not be mine, as the hat upon my head had slipped due to the knock to the head, as I was jostled, the hat fell clean off my head hitting the ground, I tried to keep looking down but the man holding my arm cried “Wait a minute, this is no rebel, this is a woman, what kind of trick is this?”

“No trick my dear boy” Haytham stated as he swiftly plunged his hidden blade into his throat, as he coughed, choked and spluttered his last, Haytham pulled me free of his weakening grip. All hell broke loose, as they with swift precision took down the British guards, they barely stood a chance, as this fort ran red with their blood, I was dragged along, forced to witness yet more
brutality. I kept my head down, but sadly this did not shield me from the violence going on around me, in fact it made matters worse, as I witnessed to many a man dropping to their deaths, seeing the light fade from their eyes, their last breath, I closed my eyes praying it would be over. The screams, gunfire and chaos continued until, all but a few clicking of swords could be heard, one final blood curdling scream echoed throughout the fort, it was a blood bath, I was disgusted to be walking among it, and at the center.

Haytham released me momentarily, as they closed in upon the general, forcing him to reveal where they had hidden their comrade, as soon as he had told them, I knew he was a dead man, as he disposed of him, I snapped my head up, looking around, I began to dart through the strewn bodies of the guards, heaving as the sights became all the more gruesome. I was putting a good distance between myself and my captors, but of all the people to stop me, an English guard who had somehow escaped their rampage, seized me, holding a blade to my throat calling to Haytham “I have your little accomplice, put down your weapons” his intent was to be a hero, avenge his fallen brothers.

“You foolish boy put down your blade”

He did not heed his words, someone had smacked up on him, placing a gun to his head, he dropped the blade, holding up his hands. “I surrender, let me live”

“I will let you leave here if you fare well in a sword fight with our, what did you call her, little accomplice”

“What?”

He threw him a sword, my bonds were cut, a sword placed in my hand, we were being used for their entertainment “We don’t have to do this, they seek to entertain themselves by our suffering, do not play into it”

He seemed shocked as I spoke “Your English, why did you help them?”

“I was given no choice” I reasoned.

“Well you understand I have no choice either” with that he swung his blade at me, I barely managed to pull away in time, the sword heavier than I had anticipated, I wielded it clumsily, but managed to defend any attack intended to wound or kill me. As I grew tired from holding back his swipes, the blades clashed once more, my arms were heavy, my muscles aching, my moments became sluggish. They continued to jeer, my guard slipped ever so slightly and his blade cut across my shoulder, it stung as the blade sliced open my skin, I winced, staggering back, hoping to avoid a counter given my weakened stance. His next swipe managed to nick my cheek, I gasped as his blade grew closer to its mark.

It was then I heard a loud bang ring out, the man holding to his chest, fell to his knees as the blood flowed forth “Why?” he croaked, looking at Haytham, holding the smoking gun in his hand “It was growing tiresome” he remarked, as the man collapsed upon the ground. “Not bad for one who obviously has never wielded a blade” as if his weak compliment meant something to me, forced to defend myself, I knew he was hoping I would have killed the man, he seemed intent on turning me into one of them, my arms ached, but I kept the blade in my hand.

“Drop it” Hissed, as if reading my mind, as the sword slipped from my hands, as did my bid for freedom. I was to remain with them, unknowing of how long for. They searched the fort, find their friend in stocks, as they released him, they welcomed him with open arms, as their numbers grew, my hope faded, more watchful eyes to ensure my chances of escape were now merely a dream.

As I leant against a wall away from the group, but still in their view, it was then my communicator sparked to life, and all of my worst fears were realized, I did not recognize the voice “Hello Alicia, we are working on getting you back” I knew this was not out of kindness, but due to the chamber not being accessible until the body within was removed unharmed, there had been safety features installed, without any way to override them.

“What have you done with Cole?”

“He lives only to bring you back, once we have you back safely you can say your goodbyes, the power source is running only upon sustaining you, we need to fix the damage we caused to bring you back, so sit tight this may take a while”

I fell against the wall, sliding down slowly until I sat upon the ground, Cole was in danger, I felt helpless stuck here while he was forced to do the bidding of these cruel power hungry men, now our fates were aligned, both of us at the mercy of our captors, with little hope of escape.

I didn’t even see Haytham approaching me, he dragged me up, turning me so he could re bind my hands, I passively allowed him to tie me. I felt like an hope I had been holding on to in the silence fade, I slumped forward, as they dragged from the fort back to their hide out, I didn’t recall the journey back, they were cheering calling it a victory.

“Victory?” I pondered aloud; I had meant to merely think it.

“Would you not say so?” Haytham asked, waiting for my response intently, my apathy became a sense of reckless disregard as I lost control once more “If that is what victory looks like, I am disgusted by it, you showed no mercy, even when it was called for”

He looked furious, but somehow held to his calm and simply retorted “And we could not have done it without your help, you should be proud to be on the right side”

His words only served to spark my anger, I attempt to pull up from my seat, but I was held in place, and warned to calm down least they silence me, I felt trapped, I wanted to say so much, but
so many things could destroy history, and others would just lead to my imminent demise, which would not keep Cole alive, if I died here the chamber would seal off, destroying everything. So relaxed my tensed shoulders, falling into silence as they raised mugs to each other, pasting each other on the back, for a job well done they declared.

“I would rather you join the celebration” Haytham said gently, as he took the seat beside me.

I just looked at him, feeling the listless apathy return, I looked defeated, and then dropped my gaze, he cut my hands free, placing a mug before me, he smiled before he walked back to the thick of the celebration. Leaving me unbound, staring into the mug of amber liquid, I took a cursory glance toward the door, to see two very angry looking men blocking the door, their arms crossed as additional barrier, they did not look the type to be messed with, I did not recall them being with us earlier.

Caught staring, I was fixed with an evil eye, forcing my gaze back down to the mug before me, wondering what harm would come of it if I drank from it, I grasped the handle, I sipped it, recoiling, I had forgotten how much the ale making process had improved, this was vile, I couldn’t drink any more, I placed the mug back upon the table.

Charles noticed my reaction “Can’t take your ale aye?” he mocked.

“The English don’t know good ale, have you tasted the piss they produce” William spluttered mid drink.

“Well I think we should give her a good stiff American” Thomas laughed darkly.

“Now gentlemen we do not need to turn to vulgarity, we won, the Templar’s took another fort under control, and pushed back the British advance, now that is victory” Haytham cheered.

He promptly walked over, seizing my arm, stating “You will only cause trouble being English and all” dragging me up the stairs, throwing me back into the blacked out room, promptly locking the door before returning to their celebrations, that lasted long in the night, the communicator was silent, nothing I said prompted a response.

I pulled into the corner of the windowless room, pulling my knees to my chest, holding to them, feeling small, and helpless, hoping something, anything would work in my favor.
Alicia has finally a choice, can she make the right one?

As I was released from my dark prison, allowed to descend the stairs and re-join the rabble, I saw new faces, I felt confused, Haytham asked me to take a seat, I did as he asked without a fight, everything felt beyond my control so I couldn’t muster the energy.

So I sat and listened to him, sinking a little further in my despair, I found as my hope was fading so fast that all of Haytham's preaching of the Templar vision began to convert me, I found myself actually listening to him instead of dismissing him as a mad man. I perked up when he entered the room, I wondered if he was right or whether it was Munchausen syndrome, having some strange affection, and respect for my captor.

I still felt equal hatred toward him, all he had forced me to witness, and be a part of, the message was good but the methods they chose to deliver it where more than wrong, but I couldn't hope to be heard. Haytham noticed me listening to his words, and asked me if I would like to be an official Templar, sworn in to their brotherhood, I refused, holding to what remained of my defiance and resistance, but I felt it weakening.

It was strange to begin to look upon him in a different light, I cursed my desperate mind for needing a way to make this hell more bearable, searching for allies were there were none.

As he returned to speaking, I found my eyes locked upon him, as he spoke with such conviction that I could not help but be moved. And just as I was starting to wonder about the realities of this world he announced "I am to take care of some personal businesses, I shall not be long"

And with that he was gone, I felt strangely lost without his guidance, I began to re think all I started to feel, was it all lies, swept up in his charisma, his ability to speak before a crowd.

I looked around the room; Charles stood and walked over to me, sat next to me waving over Johnson, and Thomas.

"Well now the cats away the nice can play" Lee said smugly. "Now your protector is gone you are going to be punished you English bitch" He barked

"Protector?" I added confused.

"Yes is not obvious the man is pathetic around you, he is sweet on you, holding you away from harm, keeping you in a locked room that only he has the key for, we should remove this impediment for our respected leader"

"Yes but let us have some fun first Lee” Thomas wined.

"Be my guest"

He got up and left me with Johnson, and Thomas, I knew they were not asking my permission, I looked from one to the other, trying to figure out which one of them seemed the most reasonable. Johnson seemed to have the least intimidating visage, but I may have been making a mistake in my panic, again finding allies were there was none.

It was strange to think that Haytham had been protecting me, all he had done seem contrary to the point they put across as fact, I was not so blind, or was I? I had no time to ponder this, I had to find a way to either escape, or at the very least stall them; I had no idea how long Haytham would be absent.

"I am starting to see some logic in your beliefs" I confessed.

"Did you hear that Lee the girls giving us her backing" Johnson mocked.

"Oh yes I so live for your acceptance, now I can sleep at night" Lee added with extreme sarcasm, rolling his eyes for added effect. I should have expected this response, yet in my desperation to make them see me as anything other than the enemy I hadn’t thought it through. In the silence that followed I grew more anxious.

"Shame you’re a red coat, your bright, and beautiful woman” Johnson quipped, regarding me with his head cocked.

Strange compliment I had not expected to hear from any of them, but I knew it did not work in my favor, as they were clearly identifying me as the enemy, and no amount of reason would move them, stalling them would not be possible, I had to make a break for it.

I glanced toward the door, Charles rooted by it, smirking "no you aren't going anywhere, he will get over whatever we decide to do to you” he hissed.

His intent was clear, he wanted me dead, he had barely tolerated me for Haytham’s sake, and now I was at their mercy. I found myself praying for Haytham to walk back in, but no such luck.
Johnson brushed my hair behind my ear, making my skin crawl. Thomas put his hand upon my knee. I was certain this would end badly no matter what I did, so I would go down fighting. I gave them one warning to back off, they laughed raucously. So I used the only thing to my advantage—surprise, and a street fighting type skill, recalling all I could of my kick boxing days.

Kicking Thomas's chair clear from under him, knocking him down, chopping Johnson's throat before he could react. As they reeled, I ran for the stairs knowing Lee still blocked my exit. I ran into Haytham’s room, hearing them cursing my name, then they all scrambled up the stairs, their footsteps lead me to begin shivering, I rooted myself to barricade the door, as I had no time to move anything.

They all hit the door forcefully, knocking me forward, I was flat upon the floor. Their footsteps lead me to begin shivering, I rooted myself to barricade the door, as I had no time to move anything. They all hit the door forcefully, knocking me forward, I was flat upon the floor. I was flat upon the floor, Lee knew that they would let him take it from there, if I was not going to let them play, I would pay for the place of my birth. Gripping my hair and dragging me up by it, I hissed as my scalp burned, he dragged me down the steps, throwing me down, I scrambled up to my feet, to see all three converging upon me, Lee looked like evil personified, Johnson annoyed, Thomas looking a bit unsure of himself, following their lead, I felt guilt for going at him as he seemed to be not on board with it, but he was the most distracted. I charged at him, seeing my chance I bolted for the door, somehow Lee beat me to it “I said you’re going nowhere, you need to cool off girl” he spat; I had no idea what he meant.

I swung for me, I dodged it, but being outnumbered I neglected to look behind me, Johnson grabbed my arms allowing Lee to get a free shot, my barely healing jaw raged with the new agony, the blood oozing from my mouth, was now dribbling down my chin. I was forced down to my knees a large metal tub was kicked in front of me, someone grabbed the scruff of my neck, I fought hard against the force pushing me closer to the water, I strained but soon I was submerged, struggling to breathe, I thrashed madly, screaming under the water, causing myself to almost swallow water, despite the struggle to breathe, the scream gave more power to my rage, somehow I managed to pull out, elbowing whoever it was square in the nose, knocking the container over I scrambled away, while they fell over each other, I made it to the door, pulling my wet hair from my face so I could see.

I had no idea where I was but I ran straight ahead, then down alleyways, darting round at a lighting pace I didn't know I had, somehow I managed to lose them, I couldn't believe I was free, free with nowhere to go seemed anti climatic, I was relieved but unsure what to do. So I allowed myself to catch my breath, heaving, holding to my knees. I had no idea where I was, I was plunged into that murky water, but I was free, and breathing in the air deeply.

I decided to keep running, put more distance between them, and myself. I carelessly ran into a British guard as I rounded the corner, not even aware of my notoriety "whoa watch it miss" He slowed me down, he was about to allow me to pass when he gave me a second look like he recognized me. "You, you aided patriots to raid a British fort, get back here!” He cried.

I bolted from his reach, the town crawling with British guards, so evading them all was difficult, but I overshot another corner while looking back, straight into the arms of a pair of guards.

"You will come with us” they ordered.

Pushing me forward every time I lagged, great I thought, I had just regained my freedom only to lose it again. I overheard them mumbling “What do we do with her? We have nowhere to house a traitor, and after the last failed hanging the gallows where destroyed by rioters, we could just shoot her now”

“What if she has information? can't be difficult to torture a woman, she looks like she would break easy”

Offended, and annoyed that they didn’t allow me to explain, and continued to decide my fate without the facts, but could I expect justice. As we approached the only fort still under British control, they turned us away, not even giving the guard a chance to speak, telling them they did not have the resources or time to waste upon me, they were told to leave for new York, transport me to fort George, they had suffered less in the recent riots, Boston was becoming harder to hold on to. Now I finally knew where I was, not that it did me much good, I looked to both of my escorts, they stared harshly at me.

“I am innocent if that matters at all” I quipped sarcastically.

“Shit, you’re English, why are you working against your country men, and why become a traitor?” he asked in utter disbelief.

“I was their prisoner, not their charge; I did not help them”

“Hmm maybe she’s telling the truth, she does look pretty beat up”

“She would lie though to save her neck wouldn’t she”

“Maybe, but what if she is innocent?”

“Then they will find out, won’t they” They continued discussing my fate like I was not there; I just continued walking forward. They were given horses, I was bound once more, having to ride with one of the guards, we travelled for many days, they took constant stops, but they made sure I never went hungry, or thirsty, so they already were less cruel captors than Henway’s rabbles, they even allowed me the basic necessity of
somewhere to wash, I think they only did it to make things easier for themselves, as we were in close quarters often.

It was worrying to know a more than a week had passed before we finally reached New York, no word from Cole, or those holding him, all was silent, I had heard no whispers of Haytham on our journey, so I had begun to put him out of my mind, and focus upon reasoning with my countrymen if that was at all possible, so far, no one man had been reasonable, and I had gone from one bad situation, to the next.

I was praying there were British generals who would actually hear me out, when reached the fort. But when we pulled closer, you could see it was under attack, the guards dragged me inside, throwing me behind a wall, they prompt disappeared into the chaos of it all. I feared I was a sitting target for this cannon fire, destroying the wall’s. I heard another crash, I found myself wondering aimless through smoke and rubble, I feared every crash, and explosion, thinking it would be the last thing I heard, luckily I managed to walk across without being shot, by cross fire or cannon fire, many close calls had me on edge.

I had barely avoided a falling tower, I found myself in a yard. Realizing I was unarmed I found the closest poor dead soldiers loaded pistol. I was glad it was loaded as I had no idea how to work one of these, taking his sword apologizing as I did, even though I knew he couldn’t hear me, and no longer had need of them, it still felt wrong to steal from the dead, but I had to do what I could to assure I would not become one of them.

I pulled to the side of ruined building, seeing two men grappling with each other, I couldn’t hear what they were saying, but the only clear path was passed them, they seemed too lost in what they were doing to notice me, so I charged across, forced to a full stop before I passed them, as bricks fell off a crumbling wall right in front of me, another near miss.

It was then I heard his voice, it was Haytham, no idea who the other man was, I lifted my pistol thinking I could kill him, revenge for all he had put me through. I have no idea why I did what I did next, without thinking I pulled the trigger, only to realize my pistol was pointed at the wrong man, why had I saved him. And worse yet I had broken the biggest rule of time travel, I had saved a life that should have ended. I closed my eyes expecting the very fabric of time to collapse in upon me, when nothing happened, I felt confused, why was I still here?.

As I reopened my eyes glad that I hadn’t destroyed the very fabric of time, but now there was an alternate time line, one in which I had followed the same path, but what had I done to the world. So many questions and worries flooded my mind. I could hear Haytham in the distance apologizing to the dying man upon the ground, then he walked over to me, he looked utterly amazed by my presence “You did what I could not, you killed my son”

“What?” I exclaimed. Dropping the pistol like it was on fire “I am so sorry” I stammered. “I don’t know why I did that, I wasn’t even thinking”

I searched his face expecting rage, awaiting the wrath of a father for his son, but he seemed relieved, which confounded me. “You saved my life, I and the Templar’s owe you a great debt, you just ended our biggest problem with a single bullet, I could kiss you” he laughed.

I still felt confused by his reaction, there must have been things going on I was unaware of, as this made no sense at all. “Come we must leave here” he held out his hand, part of me wanted to take it, but I did not want to be stuck with his rabble after their attempt upon my life.

I stood still, staring at the aftermath of the attack, the ground littered with bodies, and one I had put there, through choice, no one forced my hand, when I had last looked my aim was upon Haytham, but I must have unwittingly aimed for the other instead, I was cursing my mistake, feeling remorse this time, all of my own making. He seized my arm, and began dragging me out of the fort, away from the destruction, finally stopping a safe distance from the madness.

He stared at me for a moment “What happened?” he pointed at my freshly bruised jaw, I wondered whether to tell him, I had no loyalty to them, but if I was going to be dragged back into that horde I had to at least seem like I was being loyal. “British guards caught me, after I gave your men the slip, they silenced me with a fist, imagine that” I scowled.

He laughed. “Well then, I shall speak plainly, I would rather you return with me of your own free will, will you do so?, become a Templar, be sworn in?”

And suddenly I had a choice, I stared blankly at his hand, then I looked him in the eye wondering, if I was stuck here what was I to do?
The set up

Chapter Summary

Alicia decides to hold off on making a decision, but soon finds a tension growing between herself and Haytham. She is given her first mission, how will it end?

I looked blankly at his hand unsure what to make of him in that moment, his eyes expectant as I met them, his gaze was unnerving, I had to look away before I remarked "I don't know what to think, but I will go back with you"

He looked relieved, but pensive of my reticence to join his cause, he guided me back through the streets "The rest of the group are here, we are meeting in the Marvern arms just round the corner, we can now push forward with our plans, thank you"

I didn't know if that would be a good thing, unsure whether to be anxious or proud, the communicator still silent, I feared for Cole, and worried of how I had changed history, and in turn the future, all of this unknowns made me fearful. I found myself trying to sneak looks at him, as I was still unsure as to whether he was holding a grudge silently stewing, it did not seem so, in fact the times I caught his eye he smiled. We entered the tavern like victors, he presented me me like a the hero of the hour, I did not feel like a hero, I killed a man, I had shot him in the back, I did not know his name, and I could not bring myself to go over to see his face, I felt unable at the time, and now I was trying to construct his face, imagining who he was as the life he was meant to have but I took from him.

"She saved my life Charles, now our vision can be realized"

Charles forced a smile, then asked "What happened to her face?"

"An English guard caught her when she escaped, hit her when she resisted arrest"

"Oh" he remarked, his face the picture of confusion.

Johnson and Thomas looked contrite, I was not comfortable taking a seat among them, but I contained my discomfort, as I knew I was staying here for the time being, so I had to do what I could to make this a bearable situation for all involved.

Lee walked over patting me on the back, leaning in he whispered "I know what you're doing, you think you have something over me now don't you" he hissed.

"We are not all conniving, I said nothing to keep the peace, that was my only motive, believe it, or don't, that is your choice"

With that I pulled up asking if Haytham had got us accommodations, we would be staying here in the inn "I would like to take my leave, a lot has occurred I need a moment"

"I would rather you stay, I need to buy you a drink, I need to thank you for saving my life"

I hadn't realized how close he was until I looked up at him, I had been focusing upon my shoes, nervously shifting as he continued to try on convince me to stay, he became more instant, I fell silent. He caught me in an intense stare, his hand finding the small of my back, I gulped as the tension in that moment was too much, I excused myself, feeling a little guilty given the look of disappointment upon his face, I mumbled my apologies as I dashed up the stairs, I took a deep breathe, leaning against the door as I closed it, my forehead pressed harshly to the wood.

I was unsure whether I wanted to start anything given that the repercussions could be extensive,
had done enough already, and I could be pulled away at a moment’s notice, I did not want to hurt him, or deal with my own hurt feelings, too many worries and questions made it seem like a giant risk, and I was unsure if I was willing to take it, there was a quieter voice, a whisper telling me I was starting to see him in a different light, I chose to ignore that whisper.

I pulled over to the small bed, I must have been exhausted from all the adrenaline that had surged through me during my assault, the attack on the fort, so sleep took my quite quickly, a deep sleep, with a faceless man questioning why I had stolen his future, I jolted up, and for a moment I expected I was back home, it took me a while to recall where I was, there was a strange sense of relief, and panic ran through me.

I pulled up, in was barley light out, I washed up, fixing my clothes and hair before descending the stairs, the silence in the tavern was eerily quiet, I was the first one. I took a seat, still in two minds of what to do, I stared around the dull bar, sitting in silence for some time before Haytham descended, shocking me as I was in my own head. "Good Morning Alicia"

He looked amazingly fresh, and alert for someone who had been drinking the night before, I hated that my first thought was that he looked good; it felt like a pathetic thought to have given the more important issues at hand. I continued to berate myself, as he pulled up a chair beside me, I had to force myself to focus upon the task at hand. This became almost impossible, as he brushed my hair behind my ear, holding his hand at the side of my face, the warmth, and softness of his skin to mine, made me nervous, I was forced to hold his stare, he leaned forward, I pulled back without thinking. "Why do you pull away?, I know you share my affection"

I was tempted to call him bold, but I knew he was right "It's complicated, I am afraid" I said apologetically.

"Is it this Cole you mentioned?" he pressed.

"No, I don't know how to explain it" I stressed hoping he would drop the topic, as how could I tell him the truth, that I was a time traveler, it would sound insane. He was very instant, his eyes never leaving mine, thankfully Charles groaning in pain shocked us, and then the subject seemed to be on hold, definitely not dropped given the wistful look upon his face, he pulled up to greet Charles.

He roughly patted him on the back purposely knowing his head was troubling him, he found amusement in it, as did I, Charles in pain satisfying image, he dropped around the other side of the table, but he actually acknowledged me, a slight nod, but given his previous demeanor this was amazing progress. Soon everyone had descended, and now it was time discuss moving forward, and how I would factor in to it, was still a matter of confusion for me.

A messenger barged in, passing a note to Haytham, storming out so fast you barely saw him, after reading the note, he declared "ah well this changes things, I may have to ask something of you, and it will be dangerous"

He said staring directly at me "What if I don't want to go?" I challenged.

"I will send someone else, this is your choice"

Not knowing the details, made it foolish to agree, but knowing would only make it worse, so I nodded.

"Thank you, it will be safer for you than any of the others"

"What have I just agreed to?"

"Well it seems the assassins guild has seen another assassin for me, we will feed them false information all day, and you will be my contact at the meeting point, they will question you but nothing you cant handle, when they go to leave we will have them, should you have need of us we shall decide upon a signal, smash the window of tavern if need be, I will not let anything happen to you" he assured me with a lingering look.
I had to look away, my cheeks hot, Charles had been right about Haytham's feelings, and now I just felt awkward, so many reasons would make such a pairing ill advised, I shook off the feeling, but it lingered, I awaited them, as they all walked the town feeding misinformation to those they knew would be eavesdropping.

I sat in wait, sterling myself to face an assassin, the term alone conjured up a frightful image, I imagined them being cold, covered in scars, I took a deep breath, shaking myself, getting up and pacing, when they finally returned, I had almost worn a hole into the floor with my nerves.

I was given a hat, told what table to sit at, from there I would wait, hat pulled low to lure them over to me. I left first glad to walk there alone, I looked purposeful as I walked to the Malvern arms, it was a good distance, but the walk did me good, cleared my mind, gave me a strange feeling of being at home, despite knowing all the constraints, and oppression of such a time, the intrigue and complex characters made this world seem more exciting than my own. I could stay here could I?, I dismissed the thought off hand as that was ridiculous, I did not belong here, it wasn't my time, and yet I felt more at home here than I ever had anywhere else, this confused me. I finally found the inn, taking may allotted table, now it was a waiting game, holding my breath each time a new patron walked in.

Time passed, I felt frustrated waiting, soon that feeling turned to panic as I heard a chair screech, pulling next to me, I bowed my head, hearing a distinctive Irish accent declare "who are you waiting on?"

"None of your business" I grumbled.

He seized my wrist twisting it backwards, I tried to hold still, not give in to the pain cutting through my wrist, he released me, upon hearing an additional set of footsteps, another sat down at the table, a well spoken English voice declared "I would like to speak with this man, I believe I hold the authority here"

"Don't be so sure of that English"

During their conversing they seemed to have forgotten me, I was about to pull up, when a hand gripped my shoulder and forced me back down. The English man knocked the hat clear from my head, pulling down the cover over my mouth swiftly; he looked bemused "You are the contact?"

"Why are you so surprised?" I asked.

"I didn't imagine you would be, well, a woman, for one, or English for that matter, you are traitor" he spat.

My eyes fixed upon his angry stare, it stung once more to be referred to in such a manner. "I am no such thing" I added defensively.

"Whoa, wait a minute, we have a common enemy here, we both need information, and this little English rose here has it"

"Work with you?" He scoffed.

I again tried to leave, the Irishman gripping my wrist "honey, you're going nowhere"
I had heard those words so many times, and yet they still promoted fear within me, both trained to fight, years honing their skills, and then there was me with a few kickboxing classes to draw on, I did not fancy my chances.

I had to signal Haytham, but nothing was in reaching distance, and under their watchful eyes I couldn't make a single move. The Irishman's grip vice like, I tried to pull free but failed, I would have to think my way out of this.

I looked at both men, neither looked like I imagined, neither gruff or cold, the Englishman had gentle eyes, and the Irishman had a mischievous glint, rather than an evil glare, the few scars he had did not distort his features, he wore them well, like badges of honor.

"You both know I have no intention of telling either of you anything" I wasn't aiming for defiance, but that was what came out.

"There I was hopin this was a mistake, but you are one of them, shame to ruin such a face, but I must do my job, and you're going to help me, willingly or not love, trust me, I hate hurting a woman, but you're a fool if you will follow such a monster, so you don't have my sympathy" 

"You would be the assassin I assume"

"Well you're not so stupid it would seem"

"What does that make you?" I looked to the Englishman.
"I am here to investigate the murders of three British captains, and Mr Kenway is a suspect, and I for one, am disgusted that a good English woman would betray her country in such a manner"

"You will take us to him, or things will get ugly love"

"That a threat?" I questioned.

"No threat, a promise, that pretty face won't be when I am done, but I would rather you do your duty to the world, let us end the Templar's reign of madness"

"Funny how you all think you're on the right side" I mocked. "How can you tell?"

"I do my duty like a good soldier should" the Englishman quipped.

"I follow my conscience" the Irishman mocked.

I pulled away from the table grabbing a bottle, tossing it to the window, as the window had a bottle shaped hole in it, the only thing I managed to do was annoy the few patrons who saw me, they glared before continuing their merry making loudly.

My back up was nowhere to be seen, I wondered if this was a trap set for me, to end me, had I been so blind to hold any trust in Haytham, and his crew, I felt at a loss what to do next.

The Irishman gripped under my arm dragging me to my feet, with the English guard in tow, they led me out the front door, I had been holding on to hope that Haytham would be waiting on the other side of the door, but I was greeted by dark empty street, I felt a heart-breaking disappointment, I slumped into the grip of my new prison guards, I was a fool to think that I would be safe.
who can you trust?

Chapter Summary

Alicia now in the hands of an English guard, and an assassin, she wonders how she will manage to escape this unscathed.

Being dragged away again, so much for choices, as they dragged me into an abandoned building, the silence and darkness within only making my fear grow, I was forgotten. They tied me to a rickety chair, and began to discuss how to get information out of me, no control over my own fate, I felt helpless waiting for them to decide for me.

I caught the tail end of their conversation “So take it in turns then, I will talk to her first then?”

They seemed to be in agreement, the English guard stepped outside, and the assassin turned to me, and smiled “Well my lovely, now that I have you alone, I have a few questions, you can talk and save me the trouble of having to force it out of you, so what will it be?”

I could feel myself shaking, but I held to my front of courage, and I just stared him dead in the eye, glared, and remained silent, I was soon to regret my defiance, but I would hold to it none the less. The first hit was to my stomach, winding me, forcing me to lurch forward, I thought the chair would break under the stress, I groaned in pain with the force, the chair screeching in protest. I coughed and gasped for the air stolen from me, wheezing as I tried to normalize my breathing, I hung my head.

“Now you can see that I am not foolin around, would you tell me where your boy is hiding?, please do not make me continue, I would rather not, but we need dangerous men like him out of the way”

“I don’t know where he is, like you said, I am abandoned” I hissed.

“Well why not save me the trouble, and join us, you are tough, and very intelligent, I would rather you a sister in arms than my enemy, you seem like an honorable woman, I have no wish to harm you”

“I will not betray his trust in me”

“Trust?, not love?, I thought the only way there would be a female Templar is if she was, well, you know, his, lover or whatever word you would use”

“I have earned their trust”

“Well it’s nice to know you have his confidence, and he is a fool”

“He is no such thing” I was unsure as to why I was being defensive of a man who had thrown me to the wolves.

“If he hasn’t taken you to bed, he certainly is, well before we get too far of track, would you do all of us a favour and hand him over, and any other secrets of their order, seeming as you have their trust”

“No” I stated plainly.

Tears welled in my eyes as the second punch caught the side of my face, blurring my vision, as it cleared, and the pain ran through the side of my face, I recovered only to see the third punch cross the other side of my face, my neck snapped to the side, blood was pooling in my mouth, the vile taste of iron bitter in my mouth, I spat my blood to the ground. I was shaken, the panic raising within me becoming harder to mask.

“You still got nothing to say, Jesus I thought you would tell me everything in seconds, but your more stubborn than most men, and more insane, I am not enjoying this you know, I have no quarrel with you, just talk for Christ sake” he snapped, with a hint of desperation.

My head lolled back, as I had no intention of helping him, pain be dammed. He raised his fist once more but this time, nothing happened, I opened my eyes to see the English guard staying his hand, much to the assassins displeasure, they were locked in a display of dominance, both waiting to see who would back down.

"Stop this madness, I will not take part in this barbaric display, can we not talk to her first?, did you try reasoning with her?”

"Fine be my guest, my fists could do with a break” he mock bowed away from me, I was relieved to have a break from the punishment I had been taking, my face throbbed, my stomach ached, and my wrists strained against the binds.

The English guard looked at me he seemed to be filled with shame for allowing this to continue. “I am sorry, I do not agree with his methods, I will give you the same respect I give to your male counterparts, I give them the chance to give the information freely, so where is Haytham?”

"I don’t know” I said evading his eye contact, only to hide how much it hurt to feel abandoned,
hope seemed to be very difficult to hold on to, but I held to my misplaced loyalty.

"Where are his hideouts?"

"You know I won’t tell you that"

"I agree with my friend here I do not understand your loyalty to a man who has obviously abandoned you to take the punishment intended for him, why are you loyal to such a man?"

"Same reason most people hold loyalty, I believe in his words"

"You can’t seriously buy into the crap they sell love" the assassin intersected.

"How can you be so sure the creed your holding to isn’t a lie?, I know you claim to defend the innocent but you have killed many in your desperation for knowledge, and you, how are you so sure the king isn’t forcing self-interest"

Both seemed infuriated by my insinuation, they automatically went on the defensive, when someone challenges your beliefs it is always hard to accept, the change in my own was starting to frighten me, I doubted myself at every turn, but I did not doubt him, and I understood they both felt the same of those for whom they had pledged themselves. I had made no such pledge, and yet I could not deny I had a modicum of admiration for him, he never seemed shaken in his faith of his cause, were I was plagued by doubts.

They both continued to try and win me over to their side, both will very compelling arguments, but I was not willing to let go of my faith in Haytham just yet.

The English guard seemed frustrated "there is no getting through to you, I hope he is worth it my dear, as when I hand you over to the guard, they will hang you” he said with a hint of sadness.

The threat did not move me, but I hoped my trust had not been misplaced.

I thought for a moment that I was dreaming, as the doors crashed open, the assassin and guard stood defensively before me, I couldn’t see, but I heard his voice, the relief was like a weight off my shoulders, the pain in my jaw radiated through my face as I lifted my head, still bound to the chair.

The assassin ran at the nearest man to him, Charles hit the deck; I didn’t imagine he would hold his own but he did, throwing the assassin clear across the room into the wall.

I called for the English guard to untie me, he looked reluctant, but he relented and cut my bonds, only to turn back to see Haytham pointing a pistol to his head "any last words?"

"God bless king, and country, rule Britannia"

"Poor choice"

As I finally freed myself, I staggered to my feet, and I pulled in between the guard and the barrel of the pistol, which I was now staring down "wait, he did me no harm, please don’t kill him"

"Get out of the way Alicia" Haytham snapped.

I refused forcing him to lower his gun. I had to act fast, so I charged the guard out the side exit "run" I whispered before crashing to the ground. He looked even more confused, he disappeared in to the darkness before Haytham, and Charles could get to me. I dragged myself up, flinching as my body ached. I held to my side as I stumbled back in, the looks ranged from harsh, to betrayed, I could not meet his gaze, fortunately because of this I chose that moment to look up, I only saw the flash of something in the shadow.

Running at Haytham, knocking him out of the way, a white hot flash of pain cut into my shoulder, fixed between the joint, the pain tore through me as I screamed in agony, I could not hold my silence. The assassin had missed his mark, buried now deep into my shoulder, the blade was still logged in there, I looked in disbelief. The assassin gone, as I turned to assure myself of that fact, after which I dropped to the ground, the look of betrayal replaced by concern "Alicia” Haytham cried.

Things began to blur, in a state of delirium, as the pain of the beating, and blade were just too much, my body need to recover, so it would not function. I could not find my feet, I tried to pull up but my head was swimming, forcing me to crash back down. Time passed in a blur and flurry of activity, I recall being carried, as the warmth of another was next to me for a time. I soon began to run cold, as the blade was removed in a swift painful motion, I felt sick, the warmth returned as the blood rushed free, then I felt an extreme burn through the shoulder blade, as my scream rang out, I finally gave in to the blackness calling me.

I woke in a cold sweat, I could barely move my arm, my vision still not clear, I could tell I was in room, and a bed, I could tell no more. I had not the strength to look around, I tried to speak but my throat was so raw, a strained croak was all I managed before drifting back into a weary haze.

Waking once again with a greater grip upon my senses, the dim light through the window told me I was in Haytham’s room not my windowless prison. I heard the door creak, I slowly turned to see Charles of all people checking on me "ah your awake, you said some strange things in your delirium, you lost a lot of blood but you will live” he almost seemed happy at the prospect. “I will tell him you’re awake” After Charles left, I pulled myself up, forgetting my shoulder, only to be reminded by the pain that shot through the joint, causing me to hiss like a snake, as I bit back my scream. Sitting up was no easy task, but I wanted to be able to look him in the eye, read his expression.
The door pushed open slowly, he sat at the edge of the bed, and for a time he said nothing before declaring “God damn it, you could have been killed!” as he said this, he whirred round to look at me, his face the picture of severity.

“I am not sorry; I did not betray you by protecting a man who did the same for me”

“This guard will return with reinforcements, I am surprised he has not done so, it has been over a week since that night”

As I processed his words, this meant that I had been right about my instincts, the guard was a good man. My mind turned to the events of that night, some still instilled fear within me, as I recalled that panicked feeling of being alone, and helpless, it forced me to ask “What happened to you, why weren’t you there for me?” I pressed, sounding more hurt than I intended.

He visibly flinched at my remark “Is that what you think?, I did not abandon you, there are riots occurring throughout the city, we were caught in cross fire of one, and when we finally got there you were gone, but we tracked you to that abandoned building, I was glad to see that you were alive”

I didn’t know how to respond, he had not abandoned me, as I had hoped my trust was not misplaced, unfortunate circumstances had led to this situation, but the words of the guard, and assassin replayed in my mind, my belief in him was a little shaken, and I felt ashamed of it. So I hung my head in silence. I leant into him, he seemed shocked at first, as he remained rigid, but he eventually slid his arms around me, and held me, I wanted to remain there for hours, but I knew it was unwise, pulling myself free, he reluctantly loosened his grip, aiding me to sit back.

His eyes lingered upon me, before adding “You said many strange things in your delirium” he laughed.

“What did I say?”

“Well I can’t recall it word for word but I will say what I can recall, something about it not being archaic medicine in our day, and that you would probably die of an infection of some kind, then you mumbled something of time travel being dangerous, positively preposterous hmm”

He finished and turned to me, I felt the color drain from my face, my eyes widened “Whatever is the matter?, you look as if you have seen a ghost?”

“I said those things” I stammered.

“Don’t worry” he soothed “All manner of mad speech afflicts the sanest of men and women, when the blood loss is so, but thankfully you will be staying with us” he sighed happily.

I felt relieved that they thought it to be mad ramblings; I couldn’t believe I had been shouting such things without a conscious thought; it both worried, and comforted me. “Soon you will return to aiding us, of course your arm needs to heal first, so for now do as you wish, you can return to aid us when you feel well enough to do so, I owe you my life for the second time”

It was obvious this man was fated to die, but I kept standing in the way, and not only had I changed history once, but now twice, I had no right to ruin history, god knows the consequences of all my meddling had done. Maybe while I healed I could some of what I had been sent here for in the first place, to be an impartial observer.

I dragged myself up, after Haytham left, I struggled to wash, the pain was sharp, each movement shot the pain through the limb, the arm was severely stiff almost immobile, dressing was almost impossible, I couldn’t manage to put on my boots, as I stepped out of the room bare foot, slowly descending the stairs “Ah so she is alive” Thomas cheered.

“Hero once again aye, your making this quite a habit” Johnson added.

I smiled, as I took a vacant seat “Where are you off to?” Haytham asked off hand.

“I don’t know really, is it safe for me to walk the streets”

“Yes do not worry I have seen to it that your notoriety is no more, so you may do as you wish, as long as you return”

“That was my intention”

He smiled, noticing me struggling with my boots “Here let me help you”

His fingers cool against my skin, as he eased my leg into the boot, his fingers traced my skin with the second boot, sending shivers through my body. He helped me up, not releasing my hand once I was steady on my feet, his fingers softly running over my hand, I felt nervous, I snapped myself out of the moment with great difficulty, sighing heavily. I bid them farewell, I could see the look of unsurity cross his face as I stepped outside, he feared that upon my first real taste of freedom, I would bolt.

As the door closed, I lost myself in the crowds, listening to the concerns of those as they went about their daily business, I must confess it was strange to see people walking around conversing, the technology, and transport not an issue, like the current day. I found it freeing to cross a street without having to wait for crossing signals, the smells some eye watering, others I could barely place due to the difference in the air, I found myself not walking in any clear direction, just enjoying immersing myself in the culture, and era I was in. I finally found myself wondering around in awe of the differences, and yet still so many things had not changed, I watched the
British guards patrol the streets, oppression of all forms sadly had not become a thing of the past.

I heard someone making a sound to gain someone's attention, I looked around to see a familiar face in the crowd, unsure as to whether it was to be alike our first meeting. I held back, he threw his arms up in a mock surrender "I mean you no harm my lady, we were never properly introduced, my name is Corwin Wetherby, and you miss?"

“My name is Alicia”

“You needed eye me with such suspicion, I have no intention to raise the alarm, I only wish to thank you, you did not have to protect me as you did, I am eternally grateful Alicia, would you walk with me?"

He offered in such a gentle manner, it would have been ill mannered to refuse, however I was aware that should I be asked of how I spent my day, I would have to leave this part out, lying not being my strong point gave me pause, but I took him up upon his offer. He was kind enough to show me around, speaking of England with a pride I never heard from those of the current day, I envied him, his faith alike Haytham’s only that it was placed elsewhere, he was clearly a good and honorable man. As I walked around I saw many examples of this, he helped all those he could as we walked around, and he was moved by the plight of the colonists unlike so many guards patrolling these streets. He took me somewhere to eat, and instated I see a real doctor, before walking me as far back as would not be in view of prying eyes, or I hoped so.

As I walked back to the tavern, I saw Thomas outside, his eyes narrowed as I approached “What you been up to then all day?”

“Just walking around” I stated plainly.

He seemed to let me pass, I walked back inside, Haytham, and Charles missing, Johnson was missing too, I wondered why Thomas was left behind. I chose to give it no more thought, my shoulder still stiff but feeling better after a real doctor cleaned, and sewed up the wound, it had been an ordeal, my knuckles had run white, as had my face, as the needle pulled through the skin.

I looked at the ugly scar adorning my shoulder, knowing it would never fully heal, I walked up the stairs, finding my room, taking to the bed, slumping upon it, drifting into the most peaceful sleep I had managed here.
Making the decision

Chapter Summary

Alicia makes a choice

For the next few days, I did not see much of Haytham, felt strange that he should be such a big part of my life, and then he was gone.

I found myself worrying less and less about the effect I was having on the future, worrying only about making this time, and place home. Having a real friend, and ally made being here bearable, I enjoyed Corwin’s company more with each passing day, I began to look forward to our meetings as the highlight of my day. My arm began to regain movement, my thoughts did however return to Cole whenever I was laughing with Corwin, I would think how funny Cole would find this, and then I would feel guilty for enjoying my time here, breaking all the rules, caring less for the consequences, I had even considered ditching my communicator so I could never be found, but I was unable to let go.

I was walking back after another lovely day with Corwin, and when I walked in to tavern I found the four of them sitting like a jury, they all looked up when I came in, my heart sunk, I began to fear something had happened.

"Take a seat Alicia" Haytham said in a somber tone.

Now I was worried, I took a seat "what is this about?"

"Thomas would you like to start" Haytham asked.

"I am sorry Alicia but I was following you, and we know your meeting with a guard from the English side, I had to tell him, you understand"

"You did the right thing Thomas, don’t doubt it, Alicia is the one who needs to explain herself"

"You had me followed?" I felt more shocked than I should have been.

"It was for your protection, why did you not mention any of this to me?" He questioned.

"Because I did not think you would approve, he has been a good friend to me, and I enjoy his company"

The more I spoke, the more I realized, I was digging a hole for myself, so I fell silent mid-sentence.

"Damn right, I would not approve"

"I don’t understand why you are taking this so personally, I have not spoken of any of you, I would not betray you!" I put the emphasis on you, but it didn’t seem to matter what my reasons were, his anger remained.

"Do you respect me Alicia?"

I felt like this question was a trap of some kind, but I answered anyway “Of course I do”

I think he was taken back by my sincerity, as for a moment he looked stunned before he continued his rant, he seemed to be taking this very personally, and no amount of reasoning broke through. I was ordered to not see him again.

My expression must have betrayed my feelings, I felt annoyed, I forgot the era I was in. I pulled up, and stormed away.

"Where are you going?" Haytham shouted after me .

I ignored his calls, walking into my room, slamming the door, I was about to sit down when I heard footsteps running up the stairs, I braced against the door.

A loud knocking followed by a call for me to open this door now, I ignored him. He pushed the door, calling for me to end this foolishness. He slammed into the door, sending me flying forward, he pushed his way in.

"Why are you so angry?" I tried reasoning with him once more.

"Why am I angry, you parade around town with another man, and worse still our enemy, its very unseemly, and very un-lady like"

I wondered if he was being serious, I looked at his expression, as he continued his righteous rant, and you could see he believed every word, I was fed up of listening to this rubbish, I was not born in this time, and I would not cow tow to any man “I am not property, you cannot, and will not stop me seeing a good friend, he is a good man with no agenda”

“Every man has an agenda; maybe he wants to turn you against me?”
“You?” I puzzled.

“I meant us, you have made no pledge to us, and you are still a free agent as it were” So there was more to his rage than mere jealousy, and dislike for the guard, he had waited for me join them, and he had given me time, I was still plagued by doubt, but I knew I had to make a choice, after all Corwin had told me, and the assassins story, I knew to whom I would pledge my allegiance.

“Would it comfort you if I took the pledge, and became a Templar?”

“Yes it would”

“Then swear me in, and I will prove my loyalty”

“Your loyalty has never been in question, rather you choice of friends”

“He can be trusted, as can I”

His enthusiasm for adding another to their cause could not be curbed, as he led me back down the stairs, taking to another room, a rather more official looking room, with pictures of what I could only assume to be passed Templars.

I felt strangely honored by the initiation, the silence, as each man drew to his place at the table, Haytham taking the space reserved for the grand master, I stood at the edge of the table, looking to him as he spoke the words with such pride.

“Do you swear to uphold the principles of our order, and all that for which we stand?”

His voice seemed to echo before I stated “I do”

“And never to share our secrets, nor divulge the true meaning of our work?”

“I do”

“And to do so from now until death, whatever the cost?”

“I do”

“Then we welcome you into our fold brother, you are now a Templar, harbinger of a new world, my the father of understanding guide us”

“May the father of understanding guide us” the others echoed the sentiment.

templar
It felt strange to finally be sworn in, to hold to an oath whatever the cost was indeed a high price. My sense of reverence for Haytham only grew in that moment, to refer to him as master, or grand master would take some getting used to, given our complicated relationship, which was still trying in the face of adversity to bloom. I still couldn’t believe I had chosen my path with the Templar's, given all I knew of them, but they did not seem the power hungry mercenary’s history made them out to be.

And the assassins were not all honorable men, and women holding to freedom, as I had learn thousands of innocent lives had been lost in their grab for power, it is strange to watch it play out before my eyes, nothing was black and white, there were good men in the British army, not all cruel and heartless like history often paints them.

Each Side had their good, and evil within, it was strange how none of them could see it, their ignorance often led to preposterous statements, blind faith will color your perception.

I recalled the assassin calling Haytham a monster, he was no such thing, he was tough, and admittedly the way we met was under extreme duress, but I did not see a monster, just a man steadfast in his beliefs. I remembered the fact of him protecting me while still a captive, and now I was here of my own free will, following him into god knows what.

I walked around the room, looking at the proud men in these paintings, all doing what they believed was right, I hope I was wise to follow their footsteps. I wondered how a female Templar would change history, or whether my influence, or reach was limited, I wasn’t sure which would be for the best, as to make no difference did not serve my sense of purpose, but to destroy, and recreate history was a dangerous outcome, as who knows what the Templars would become if they remained, would all be tough but honorable leaders, or would they become corrupt, as so many with power often do.

“All good men, it would certainly be a change to have a pretty face upon this wall”

My cheeks flushed, I felt embarrassed, I turned away from him, to continue looking at the pictures, one of them strangely enough bared a resemblance to Cole, I must have been imagining things.

“It feels strange to have made my choice”

“The right path is never the easy one” he quoted, sounding like a wise man. “I shall buy you something new to symbolize your becoming a Templar” he smiled leaning causally against the wall.

“So what do I call you now?”

“Whatever feels proper, with the right level of respect”

“Master Haytham, will take some getting used to”

“There will be times when you can be less formal, such as now, you needn’t call me by title at all times”

“I guess you’re right, I don’t think I have ever followed a leader before”

“I have faith you won’t disappoint me”

“Thank you” I responded unsure if his faith me was misplaced, never mind mine.

I tried to step passed him, but there was not ample room to do so, I asked him politely to move, instead he turned to face me, my heart began racing in my chest, his eyes fixed upon me, I knew agreeing to become a Templar would force the issue to a head, as he looked like a man upon a mission, his eyes focused upon me. “It is wise, this may complicate matters”

He ignored my words, pressing me gently to the wall, as he leant in, I had no way of pulling back, not that I wanted to, his lips were so soft as they met mine, the anticipation leading up to this kiss had been high, and it did not disappoint, he knew exactly what he was doing. The gentle sweetness of the kiss gave way to a more wanton desire, he pressed himself against me, moaning softly into my mouth, as our tongues touched, shivers ran through me.
Someone calling his name forced us to cut our first kiss short, he pulled away breathless “I have wanted to do that for some time now” he said in a breathy tone.

“What is it Charles?” he sounded mildly impatient.

“Should we not bring her up to speed on our plans?”

“Yes, your right, Alicia you will now be welcomed fully”

“Glad I was not welcomed in the same manner sir” Charles mocked.

“Ah yes indeed” he laughed, with a mild sense of embarrassment.

“I will say only one more thing upon the matter, it took you long enough” he slapped him across his back jovially.

It was as if all the bad feeling toward me was gone, I was accepted, I was one of them, and maybe I was considered an equal.

There was another Templar who had been taken into custody in a fort right here in new York, I prayed that it was not were Corwin was based, when they revealed the name, I breathed a sigh of relief, the last thing I wanted to do was see him caught in the crossfire, but I also knew this would be more acts of aggression against my fellow countrymen. It seems that due to the turning tide of the war, that supporting the British was no longer a feasible option, so we had to do all we could to restore order, by weakening the British hold in New York, I was uncomfortable as they kept using derogatory names for the English guards. I contained my discomfort, and I intended to follow their lead later that day.

They needed a way in, and given that the place was swarming with guards, a stealthy approach would be the only way in, we had to remain unseen, this would not be easy.
Charles and Haytham came over to me, they both looked awkward in their stance, they just hovered, I eyed them both with suspicion “What is it?”

“Well we have decided upon a way to enter the fort” Haytham said nervously, his eye contact evasive.

“What is it?” I pressed.

“Charles” Haytham passed on the explanation.

“Well Alicia, we need you to dress feminine, and act the damsel in distress blocking a convoy with a turned over cart, they will be more than polite with you, then we can take the convoy without much trouble”

“You want me to flirt while you kill the guards?”

“Yes” Charles added bluntly.

I looked to Haytham who was pretending the wall was more than interesting, I sighed heavily; I couldn’t imagine getting used to bloodshed. The thought of some poor innocent guard smiling while a blade ran through his back, saddened me, a tears clouded my eyes, and I snatched the outfit they had bought for me.

I walked the stairs slowly, they were used to doing whatever was necessary, I was not, I still felt guilt and shame as each good man fell before me, but I knew that Haytham was a good man, I took a deep breath. I was thankful that the outfit was very demure, but feminine. I felt strange dressed in such a manner, it had been a while since I had worn a skirt, I felt uncomfortable, I didn't want to leave the darkness of the windowless prison, but I knew time was of the essence, so I stepped out.

I slowly descended the stairs to a chorus of mock cat calls, and whistles, all in aid of making me uncomfortable, Haytham eyes were fixed upon me, his eyes scanning me up and down, under his scrutiny I felt more embarrassed, my cheeks ran hot. His stare was intense, he walked over “You are a vision”

“Can we go now!” Thomas protested.

“Yes Thomas we can go”

“Yes Thomas we can go” he quipped.

I smiled to myself, unlike him to give such a tasteful compliment, maybe it was Haytham’s proximity, but I had rarely heard him be anything other than boorish, and I would have rathered the vulgar remark, that would of put me at ease. I felt on show as they lead me to the cart, pushing it over, I kept offering to aid them, but they were content to struggle with male pride, and I was in no mood to argue, so I just laughed as they strained needlessly.

I made a show of walking around my cart, with its spilled goods, a hand touched my shoulder “Miss your in our path”
"It was not my intent, my cart over turned, and I am unable to even budge it, the aid of a few strong men would be greatly appreciated" I felt sickened by my performance, and worse still he was so polite, and helpful, I wanted to tell him to run for it. Haytham stalked over as the guard had begun to return my awful attempt at flirtation.

"Who is this then?" he declared as Haytham pulled beside me.

Haytham didn’t say a word, he simply took the hidden blade to his throat, clean silent, and hardly any blood spilt, as he dropped to the floor. “Was that necessary?”

“I didn’t appreciate the way he was looking at you” he stated. They all disappeared returning in English army gear, some ill-fitting, but Haytham looked good in red, very handsome. “It would seem you suit every colour” I complimented him.

“My lady” he held out his hand, brushing off my compliment with cheeks to match the coat.

I pulled up on to the convoy, looking back at the mere spots of blood in the street, none of the colonists cared if a few red coats died, they remained hushed, and some even thanked them, it pained me to hear, and to see that poor man’s shock, and anguish up close was a horrible sight, and it was not over yet, they had to retrieve their friend, and I could imagine it would be no small matter.

Once inside the fort, I watched them expertly stalk guards, and cut them down silently, they were the lucky ones, their death was a quick agony, once we were spotted, all hell would break loose, I held my breath in horrified anticipation, I choked on that breathe when I saw Corwin, my heart sunk, I had to remain hidden but I wanted to warn him, when the terrible alarm rang, I knew I was too late. I did all I could to reach Corwin, dodging guards, and praying a crossfire did not catch me.

"Corwin" I yelped as stumbled forward.

He turned to me, his eyes wide "Alicia get out of here" he cried.

"Why are you here?"
"They transferred us to take the prisoner"

As I cursed cruel fate, an English guard charged at me with a bayonet, Corwin shot him down, the pain on his face in shooting down his fellow officer broke my heart "Please leave" he pleaded.

I tried to spot Haytham in the smoke, and gun fire, but as they wore red, they blended in with the British guards, so I cut through, hoping I was running toward Haytham, as the main commotion sprang from there, so I was running into the chaos, and unarmed, despite having several chances to arm myself, but my conscience could barely reconcile being here, never mind killing.

The man whirred round it was not Haytham, he drew his blade, I turned to run, but I ran into another soldier, cornered, I had to do something, I pried a blade from a long dead soldiers hand, his cold dead eyes were nightmarish to look upon. I turned defending myself, one man was gunned down, I could not see who had fired the shot, whether it was intended or not, I didn't have time to care, as our blades clanged together, him intending to kill, me defending myself.

Corwin broke through the smoke and cut him down, again the look of anguish was difficult to witness, he seemed to falter in his step, he staggered forward, I couldn't tell what had happened until I saw the blood spread from a now apparent bullet wound, he dropped forward into my arms shaking "Alicia don't let them think me a traitor, I wish to die a patriot" he strained as the pain cut through him, I felt like this moment was not real, I looked to him in shock and disbelief, my only friend of this time, I had only met him, and now I was to lose him, and worse yet I believe it was at Haytham hand. The tears flowed freely from my eyes, the pain in my chest, as I struggled to find my breath, and the words "Corwin, I am so sorry" "Please remember me, and think about the choice you have made, I know you have not the cruel nature that will be asked of you" he wheezed.
"Corwin please, don't die" I screamed as he fell silent, becoming still in my arms. "God damn it, if this was my time we could have saved you" I cried as I couldn't accept it. I held to him, and did not let him go, I sobbed uncontrollably, he had died protecting me, I was going to kill Haytham for this, I felt a surge of fury run through me as silence fell over the chaos. I watched them cut the British flag from its post, it fell slowly carried upon the breeze, I felt a sadness as it hit the ground, Charles snatched it from where it lay as one of the many fallen, casting it in to the flames, I felt that disrespectful act spark my rage. I slowly placed Corwin to the wall, running over to Haytham first "Did you shoot that third guard?"

"Yes you were in danger, and it seems you had no intention of picking up a weapon" He had the nerve to sound angry with me.

"You shot Corwin" I hissed.

"I could not tell that from where I stood" He stated flatly.

I knew he was right, but it still hurt to know he had been the one to pull the trigger, it felt harder to handle, my rage had drained from me, my eyes staring to the blood stained ground, I had helped them kill all of these men, all they knew was they were doing their duty, and they were cut down in the name of bringing about some kind of order, to prevent a long draw out bloody war, but the casualties were still too many for me, and we had only just begun, the idea filled me with dread.

I wept silently for Corwin, as they introduced me to the man for whom this massacre had taken place in the name of, I barely acknowledged him consumed by my grief. Haytham had to drag me away from the fort, as I didn't want to leave Corwin, he deserved a honorable burial, I had to protect his good name. But for safety we had to leave, my eyes did not leave him until he was beyond my sight, even then I could see his face vividly. His blood stained this vile uniform of deception, I felt uncomfortable in this attire but I had to wait, when we finally returned to the tavern.

I pulled away from Haytham, pulling my arm free of his grip, as they welcomed their new colleague, and celebrated a victory, I tore up the stairs, as I could not take part in this, a good man had just died, I needed to grieve, not celebrate. I slammed the door behind me, falling flat upon the bed, I continued to cry until my chest ached from the heaving, my eyes and throat raw. I pulled into myself, holding my knees to my chest, I just kept reliving that horrible moment, and hearing his last words to me.

I pulled up looking down at my hands, it felt like something was missing, I wanted to hold Corwin, and not let go, his absence only made my heart ache. The door creaked open slowly but loud enough for me to stare vacantly at Haytham creeping in to the room, as if he feared my reaction, he sat beside me, my rage was gone, as he had found the strength to forgive me despite shooting his child, unknowing of who he was to him. I still felt so broken, he pulled me into his arms "I wish I could take away your pain"

I pulled back "I wish I could do the same for you"

"My pain?" he questioned.

“Yes you may hide it well but I see it, and I feel terrible that I caused it”

He sighed heavily “Yes I do wish things could have been different, I wish you could of met him, he was a remarkable boy, I wish he had not taken arms against me, but he did, so one only one of us would return that day, and it was to be me”

He sighed heavily, I was unsure how I felt about that, but I pulled him closer, as I pulled away, he took my face in his hands, brushing away my tears, his expression pained, he kissed me softly upon the lips, as my tears began to fall a fresh, the kiss became more urgent, I wanted to forget the agony threatening to tear me apart, losing myself to a long withheld passion, as removed the red coat, and white shirt spattered in blood, I was glad to no longer look at it, he pulled my shirt free over my head, I was glad to be rid of it. Both of us staring at the other for the first time, his body was adorned with many scars, but his toned physique after years of training was a sight to behold.

I was thankful I had taken care of myself the past few years as he eyed me appreciatively. He pulled me underneath him, his hands gently caressing my sides, before slowly tracing over my stomach, he splayed his fingers over my breasts before he groped them gently, I moaned softly encouraging him to be a little more heavy handed, a louder cry escaped my lips, I began to feel wanton under his intense gaze, as he bit his lip, he lowered his head to left breast, keeping a firm grasp while freeing the hard nipple to his tongue, as his tongue teased the nipple, he continued to grope more harshly, the pleasurable sensations force my whole body to stiffen, arching my back, desperate for him to continue.
He took my nipple into his mouth sucking forcefully, a delighted cry escaped my lips, he continued until my cries became moans of ecstasy, he then took to my right breast repeating the animalistic act, eliciting cries of pleasure, my body began to tremble under him. He pulled the skirt free of my hips, and with it my underwear, his eyes dark with desire. He removed his trousers and boots, standing in all his glory for me to see, his erection was impressive, he climbed over me before I could reach out for him, pressing his cock to my slick entrance, pushing in slowly, allowing my sex to adjust to him, pulling out slowly, growling as the friction delighted him, he built up a gentle rhythm, kissing my lips softly.

He continued to slowly thrust deep in me, the slow build of pleasure led to a long and pleasured cry, as my climax wracked my body, tightening me around him “Oh god” he exclaimed. His cock hardening as he to begin to feel the build to his own delicious release, he groaned vocally beside my ear, as his body trembled, and his cock pulsed with the continued waves of pleasure, his breathe heavy, he pulled me into a soft and gentle kiss. His touch was loving, and delicate, he pulled out, dragging me into his arms, both of us sweaty, and satisfied. I don’t think a man had ever been so gentle with me before, wanting everything to last as long as possible, lust always had got the better of them or me, making the release swift and gratifying, but this had been a slow enjoyable build to a heady release. Both of us had for that moment had forgotten pain, and known pleasure in its place. Despite the pain haunting me, I slept soundly in his arms, it was he who made all the difference.
Chapter Summary

Alicia still struggling with her grief, tries to find a new focus

The next morning things were as they should be, I woke next to man I was starting to fall for, and his smile made me feel nervous, finding our clothes piece by piece, while casting glances to each other. I picked up my old clothes, as that skirt, and that shirt just served as horrible reminders to the truth seeping into my conscious mind.

Corwin was dead, and he died in my arms, I staggered back into the wall, holding my hand to my mouth to muffle a gasp, my eyes misted over, the pain returned to my chest, the pressure crushing upon me. Haytham ran over to my side “Alicia?”

“I can’t take it, how do you survive such a loss?” I heaved.

“You just keep moving forward” a cliche, but he seemed sincere

He helped me up, I was still unsure of my legs, I felt unsteady, but I started walking forward, one step at a time, the simple things felt difficult, I could barely focus.

The next few days passed by in a blur, switching between feeling nothing, to being in agony, then one morning I just pulled up, washed and dressed, and went for a walk, unsure of what I was looking for, but just to be focusing on something other than the all-consuming grief, I walked like a woman on a mission.

When I walked into someone, I looked up to see an old face, not a friendly one. He reached out for me, I knocked his had away, taking a defensive stance, staring him directly in the eye, he attempted to walk over to me, I threw a punch, he knocked my arm out of the way, I stumbled forward. My rage grew, I lashed out at Shay, connecting with his jaw, the crunch was satisfying.

Shay grabbed me from behind, holding my arms tightly against me, while I raged “You going to calm down now?” he hissed in my ear.

My rage was unsatisfied, and for the next hour until I was more than exhausted, I could no longer lift my arms, looking at him, with what was left of defiance. He stretched out his hand once more, I finally took it begrudgingly, as I couldn’t lift myself up.

“What are you doing here?” I snapped.

“I came to seek you out love” he swaggered around me, like we were familiar, his confidence I envied, and found highly annoying, I scowled as he drew closer. “Are you going to bite?, if so can I choose where?” he added in a smarmy manner.

“What do you want?” I pressed, as I did not wish to remain in his company, I felt a my twinge in my shoulder with the memory of our last meeting.

“Well I have done some soul searching, and it took some thought, but there was something you said to me, you were right, and they are doing it again, willing to risk thousands of lives just for god knows what, those innocent people do not deserve to be their means to an end, I was wondering if you could put in a good word in for me with the Templar's”

“Are you serious?” I questioned, thinking it sounded incredibly insane, but I couldn't deny his fighting skills would make him a great asset than myself, so I had to put my bad feeling aside, and give it some genuine thought.

“You know it’s not up to me” I sighed heavily. Wishing to be anywhere but here, noticing this was pushing the pain aside, as I was forced to focus upon Shay.

“I know that, but he won’t even meet with me unless you talk him round”

“Why should I?, how do I know you’re not just trying to trick me so you can get to him?” I sniped.

“True, I can see why you would be weary, but I am genuine, and will prove it if need be”

I looked him square in the eye, he seemed genuine, but I feared trusting him, I did not want to be the reason the Templar order was destroyed, so I thought upon it, knowing all of the risks I grumbled before agreeing.

“Ah I knew I could count on you, you seem like the decent type”

“Don't make me regret this” I stressed, thankful for the new distraction.

“I won’t, and I should probably introduce myself, given our first meeting was not under the best of circumstances”

“Don't worry it seems to be the way of things” I quipped realizing that only one man had been good to me from the start, and he was now dead, I felt a rush of emotion, I choked back the tears that threatened to flow, the lump in my throat strained as I gulped it back.

“I am Shay Mc Cormack, pleased to meet you”
I had to pull myself out of my despair to notice his out-stretched hand, and he was waiting for me to return the gesture. Taking his hand firmly, I shook it "My name is Alicia, nice to finally have a name for your face"

"Ha I am assuming you have not been thinking of me fondly”

"No, the scar on my shoulder is reminder enough"  

"I am sorry, but you know that blade was not for you, may I see it, or that a strange request”  

"It is, I assume I am one of the first to survive your blade”  

"Yes you are”

I felt strange granting his request, but I relented, pulling the shoulder of my coat down, and pulling back my shirt, revealing the jagged angry scar. He curiosity didn't seem satisfied by merely seeing it, he stretched out his hand, tracing the path of the scar, I narrowed my eyes, unsure of his need to do so, I pulled my shirt, and coat back in place. "Your curiosity satisfied?”

"Yes, and again I am sorry, you know I never meant to harm you”

His genuineness seemed to be more difficult to dismiss, I sighed heavily "Ok wait for me here, I will speak to Haytham”

"Thank you, I have to do this, I can’t let another disaster occur, I have to stop it”

"I understand the urgency, I will be back within the hour”

I hurried back to the tavern which we had seemed to take up permanent residence in, I rushed through the door "Charles, where is Haytham?”

He pointed to the room in which all our planning took place, I walked in to see him combing over writing and maps, he looked lost in it, so I coughed to gain his attention. "Ah Alicia, I am quite busy I am afraid”

"I have a matter of some urgency to discuss with you”

"Ok, take a seat” he added pushing away his maps, and writing.

I sat next to him, I was curious to look at what he was so intently staring at, but I held my focus upon what I knew would be a difficult question. "Well do you recall the assassin who was hired to kill you?”

Not the best way to put him forth as an ally, I feared I had started on the wrong foot. but I continue regardless "He is wanting to leave the assassins to join us, he wishes to stop them, he would be an asset, his fighting skill, and knowledge would be of great use”

He cocked his head to the side, raising his eye brow before saying "And who will watch my back?”

"Me, I will gladly take my place as your guard”

"Anything to remain close” he teased.

My cheeks flushed, I dropped my gaze, he took my chin gently in hand, forcing me to look up at him "You needn’t be embarrassed, I would be honored to have you watch my back, I trust you, and having you close will be a wonderful aspect of this new addition, he will need to prove himself first, I will not just let him waltz in here”

"Understood”

He leant forward, kissing me softly, as he pulled away, he left me wanting more, my body tingling. I opened my eyes, and he returned to his maps, and writing, with a wry smile upon his face. "I promised him I would return to tell him, I will go now”

He nodded. I was not used to this chased passion, I wanted more, every time he kissed me, the urge, and need only grew, it was both delightful, and frustrating. As I left, it was easy to find Shay, but he was up high upon a building observing the city, not sure what drew my eye upward, but I spotted him, and wondered how I would get his attention. He must have seen me, as he jumped, and somehow fluidly rolled, and pulled up to his feet, I was in awe of his grace, and strength.

"How do you always spot me first?” he inquired.

"I don't know, I am not normally so observant, I guess I have found I have to be, given who I have chosen to work for”

"What did he say?” he asked eagerly.

"You were right he wishes for you to prove yourself, but he did not seem adverse to the idea, anytime you meet with him, until sworn in, I will remain present and watchful”

"Your his bodyguard now?”

"Yes, why is that strange?”

"No, it will be nice to have a friendly face”
"I am hardly a friend, I would not even say an ally at this point"

"I know your instincts tell you otherwise, or you wouldn't have agreed to help me now would you?" he smiled widely.

His charm was endearing, but I did not wish it to compromise my judgement "We will see if my instincts are correct, hopefully I will survive the mistake should I be wrong"

"Don't be so cynical, I never wanted to hurt you Alicia, and I will make sure no other does"

"I can look after myself" I seethed.

"I know you can, but nothing wrong with an extra pair of eyes watching out for you"

"I guess not" I sighed.

"So shall I walk back with you?"

"Yes, then Haytham will decide what proof is necessary"

"Okay then, let's get goin"

Walking back side by side with a man who had almost killed me, was becoming a habit, enemies becoming allies. As we walked to the tavern "After you love" he held the door open, I walked in thrown by the chivalry. Keeping my eyes upon him the whole time he conversed with Haytham. I stood behind him so I could see all of Shay's hand movements, no sleight of hand would go unnoticed, I had never felt so focused, I felt quite protective of Haytham, even though I knew he could very well handle himself, I still wanted to prove that I could do this new role justice.

Shay often glanced up from his discussion with Haytham, and smiled at me, I ignored it, as I thought it was a tactic to put me off guard. "So" I heard Shay declare, I will set sail as soon as you can get together a crew, then I will bring back what you need"

I hadn't been listening to the conversation, now I wished I had, as my curiosity peaked, what was it he was needed from Shay? now I would not know until he returned. "Alicia how are you aboard a ship?" Shay asked.

"I would be of no use to you, I cannot sail, and you have seen my fighting skills, hardly an asset"

"Ha that maybe true, but your trustworthy, and your eagle eyed so I can imagine to watch my back there would be no better, that is if Master Haytham can spare you"

He didn't seem ecstatic over the prospect, but he sighed heavily "Bring her back in one piece would you"

"You wish me to go?"

"No, but I would need eyes upon this vessel, and you seem to trust him, so I will defer to your judgement"

I felt a lot of pressure upon my shoulders, if I was wrong I would be at sea, without back up. "I will put together a crew for you, they will also keep an eye upon you" Haytham cut through my worst possible scenario line of thought. I felt aggrieved he wanted me to go, I had been hoping to get some time alone with him, but instead I was running from one thing to the next. I had not mentioned my sea sickness, as I did not wish to fall further in anyone's estimation, I wanted to be of use to the Templar cause, prove that I was here because I had earned the right. I suppose my scar showed that I was more than just the grand masters fancy, but I still felt compelled to stand out for the right reasons in my own right.

Sailing was not what I had imagined. Shay told me he would wait outside. I looked to Haytham, he smiled warmly, calling me back over "I would rather you stay here, but he is your charge, you brought him to me, so it is your responsibility to watch him until he is sworn in, hopefully he will prove himself upon his first voyage, as I have no wish to apart from you"

He passed me a list of names for the crew, reliable men he said. His words flattered me, his hand took to the side of my face, gently brushing his fingers into my hair, and behind my neck, pulling me into a deep, passionate kiss, my hands found his collar, pulling him closer, my passion urgent, his passion matched mine, I felt myself tremble, as his hand gripped my waist pulling me closer, until we ended up wrapped in each other's arms, enjoying the feel of each other's bodies pressed against one another, as our lips sealed a final kiss, he pressed his forehead to mine, his breath as heavy as my own, his eyes stormy with desire "Please make sure he succeeds, and you return to me as soon as you possible"

As we pulled apart from one another, neither of us could stop smiling, that was certainly a motivation, and I wanted him to stop being so controlled with me, but this was another time I had to recall, being too forward would be unseemly, even though it's all I wanted, I fixed my clothes before leaving. Shay's grin was wider than mine "Giving you a proper goodbye was he"

My cheeks reddened "What of it?" I became defensive.

"Nothing, I knew he was sweet on you, it's written all over his face, lights up when you enter the room, you both try to hide it, but neither of you manage it, its sweet"

"Can we go, he gave me a list of names, they are all experienced, and in need of work"
"Fine, fine, you’re so easily embarrassed, I will have fun with that" he grinned.

Great I thought, the butt of all his jokes, did not sound appealing, so I tried to hold to an air of authority, as we recruited the crew members, as I would rather he take me seriously. I looked at the crew in its entirety, a rag tag group of misfits, and criminals, but they didn’t seem dangerous, so I felt at ease, but like a spare part, as Shay took the helm, and I did not know where to stand, so I just milled around as they cast off, working like a well-oiled machine, everyone communicating seamlessly. We soon were on the open water, voyaging toward land, I watched the sea make way for the ship, as it cut an impressive shape into the waves. I listened to them sing sea shanty’s, I smiled as some of the words were crude, and some silly, upon the crude lyrics Shay stated "Whoa lads, we have a lady aboard"

"Do not stop on my account" I insisted.

They thankfully carried on regardless, I found myself smiling, despite the waves creating a mild nausea, I was managing better than I had ever done upon water travel, they had retro versions of travel, I had tried a few, and thrown up my lunch in the process, but so far I found the knot in my stomach did not rise. Hours passed, the blinding sun fell into darkness, the lamps were being lit, Shay called for his second to take the wheel. He called me to follow him, we took to the captains quarters, taking a seat at the captain’s table, it was strange that in rank at this moment he was certainly my superior, and any orders given upon his ship I would have to follow, I was thankful to oblivious to all matters of manning a ship, I didn't like the idea of constantly be subordinate, given that I was he was my charge, entrusted to me. "So I can tell your eager to know what I the mission is and where we are to sail to, we are heading to a fort in Charleston were the assassins have taken control, he wants us to take the fort, and kill the assassins, he wants their flag as proof, as well as your account of things"

My eyes widened, I didn't think I would be in the middle of a fire fight, I didn't know how well I would manage "Don't worry it wont take too long if we catch the wind, tomorrow morning at the earliest, the night at the latest, the night maybe our best bet, as cover of darkness gives the element of surprise, but visibility would be poor" he sighed heavily.

"What is it?" I questioned.
"What do you mean?"
"You sighed very heavily"
"Only a woman would notice such things"
"Well don't evade my question"
"I don't know if you will understand"
"Try me"
"Fine, I find I hate to turn on those I once called brother, it will be trying to take them down, even though I know it’s necessary"
"Ah, understandable, these people have been your family for some time, to turn your back upon them sounds hard to process"
"Process?"
"Sorry I am using strange terms again, I mean it sounds difficult"
"It is indeed, it weighs upon me heavily"

"I can imagine it does, but you’re doing the right thing, what they have done, and continue to do it wrong, sacrificing thousands, and possibly millions in certain locations, and for what knowledge, or a finding whatever it may be first, and they are willing to let innocents die in the process, I see why you are conflicted, but I feel your right, they have no right to decide for those unsuspecting people that the ends justify the means, someone needs to intervene for them, and you’re the only one who has had the courage to speak out"

"Ok never mind, you understand it more clearly than I imagined you would"

"I understand your conflicted, but you’re doing the right thing, and I will be glad to help you do so"

He seemed speechless as I took his hand, squeezing it to show I was here for him, I felt an instant empathy for him, and I would help him see it done, and I would not let them twist his mind as they would obviously do, they followed blindly, it was obvious Shay thought for himself, and saw the wrong in their actions. I knew that I had done wrong in the Templar's cause, and I felt ashamed of that, I hadn't questioned it, only when I lost my friend did I see the dark consequences, watching the English flag drop to the ground had been difficult to watch, my countrymen calling me a traitor for seeing the value in the Templar's way, I shared in Shay's burden, the right the thing was no easy task. Sometimes the lack of mercy demonstrated by Haytham worried me, but no sooner had I written him of as cold, then he tempered his actions with kindness, and a sadness only a man with a heart could demonstrate. My conscience had begun to trouble me, but I held to my faith in the cause, we had to find a peaceful resolution, and yet peace it seemed came at a price.

Shay looked at me with a strange look upon his face, only then did I realize lost in thought I had
not let go of his hand, and he had not sought to remove it "I am sorry" I said jolting my hand away.

"Don't worry, next time you want to hold my hand just ask" he grinned.

"You're a funny man Shay" I grumbled.

He laughed to himself, before asking "would you like to take my bed?, I have no need of much rest"

"I could not do that, you need to be alert as much as I, I will take the floor if you can find me a sheet"

"Don't be ridiculous, you'll freeze down there, take the bed"

I wanted to argue the toss, but I had no idea where anything was aboard a ship, I lay down, and asked "Shay what can I expect tomorrow?"

"Possible mortars, and cannon fire, we maybe boarded if they have a few ships, so you may want to get up a moment, I will take you over the basics"

I pulled myself up with great difficulty, after getting comfortable, but I knew my skill with a blade was limited to defensive moves alone, I stood up. "Okay get into a fighting stance"

I stood in the stance I recall being OK in kick boxing, he didn't correct me, he passed me a blade, it was lighter than the sword I had been forced to use fighting the poor English guard. I gripped the hilt with ease, motions felt fluid, but I was still careful given my clumsy nature. Shay swiped his blade, I defended myself well, until I backed myself to the wall. "Watch your surroundings, back yourself into a corner, and your vulnerable, can you strike?"

"No, I can parry"

"Yes defense is all well, and good, but if you don't kill, or injure them, they will wear you down, and then they will kill you"

Ready yourself, I tried to strike, tripping forward, as Shay stepped away, I repeated this motion too many times to count, my ego was taking the hit, that I kept missing. Finally I was actually predicting his movements, I got a few strikes in before his footwork lost me, and I didn't realize where he was until the blade poked my back, I dropped my head, failed again. "Don't be hard upon yourself, your making great strides, I just would like you to be able to defend yourself should it be necessary. I nodded, and we continued, his attacks, and counters became more complex, heaving as the exertion began to get to me. I had lost him mid fight, his arm gripped my waist, his blade pressed to my throat, I grabbed his hand, but I couldn't move it, I was too tired. His lips pressed to my ear "don't worry, most won't be as good as me, I was just testing you" he whispered. His breath upon my neck began to make me nervous, as he did not release me. Things had been on such a friendly note up until that moment, I had felt nothing but comfortable around him, I was beginning to feel awkward, he finally released me, and he also seemed awkward in his demeanor. He managed to nick his face in his attempts to put the blades aside "Fuck" he cried.
I ran over to him, ordering him to turn to face me, after he did "Hey wait a minute I am the captain, I give the orders" he whined.

"Just sit down would you"

He did as I asked, I couldn't find anything like first aid kit, I guess that would be elsewhere upon the ship, so I tore the sleeve of my shirt, and found alcohol in a draw, this would have to do I thought, I poured it on the material, ringing the excess, placing it upon the side of his face, I held my hand in place, as he winced, I laughed. "What's so funny?"

"Nothing" I giggled. It was nervous laughter if I am honest, but I did not reveal that to him, I dare not, it was awkward enough, he took the cloth away, the blood flow stemmed by the alcohol and pressure, the cut wasn't too deep, and again I found myself looking for a plaster, forgetting the era, and where I was. I tuned back to him "I am OK, you can return to sleep now, at least I know you can handle yourself, I will be less worried, one more thing, when I say brace, hit the deck"

"Got it, thank you for the lesson, I needed to know"

I pulled myself back on to the simple cot, I was so tired now, I fell asleep quite quickly, the last thing I recall was Shay on the floor in front of me, saying good night, his smile was contagious, as I remember falling asleep smiling.

The awakening was a rude one, as I fell flat off the cot. I dragged myself up, thinking we were under attack, I ran out bracing myself for the worst, but I saw nothing but the crew hard at work, the sea had become quiet choppy, so it was the sharp motion that had sent me flying. I pulled back into the cabin, smoothing out my clothes, fixing my hair back, so it would not blind me at the worst possible moment. I remerged on deck, I walked up to the helm, seeing Shay smiling "Rude awakening was it" he laughed heartily.

I felt embarrassed, but I knew soon enough I would have to be ready for the worst. It was calmer seas, and once the fort was in sight, he called everyone to the ready, I felt my adrenaline flowing, the sway of the sea had yet to nauseate me, but the sight of the heavily built fort was intimidating, knowing they would be returning fire, when there was nowhere to run, reminded me of fort George, running among the chaos had been frightening, walls crashing, thick smoke clouding your way. The ships seemed to come out of nowhere, in seconds they were upon us, and we were under fire. I heard the call for brace, I dropped down behind the helm, while a cannon ball cut across in front of me, I felt the rush of the explosion that had propelled it across, it had been that close, I felt my hands begin to tremble, as the crew took to our cannons. Our fist round of fire found its mark, sinking the ship by hitting the weak spots upon the ship with explosive shots, they sunk beneath the waves with few survivors fighting to stay a float, it was a victory to watch their ship go down in flames, but I couldn't help but wonder about those on board the sinking vessel, I
had little time to allow my conscience to question, as the second ship rammed us, sending the majority of the crew, including myself flat on the deck, they pulled alongside, boarding the vessel, I saw two crew members ran through before they could move, I wondered if I stood a chance, as their screams died along with them, they turned to the rest of us.

Shay threw me a sword, not long after getting a grip of the hilt, I had to defend myself, I countered him quickly, my blade pushing through him with ease, I almost threw up, as I pulled the blood soaked blade free, he slumped to the floor, my heart pounding in my chest, I was spotted by a bigger fighter who obviously thought me an easy target, he swung an axe at me, but due to the weight of the weapon he lurched forward, I stepped aside, and as he hit the deck, I quickly ran him through before he found his feet, not long after the chaos had begun, it was over, but there was no time to celebrate, as we had to destroy the fort.

As we sailed in close, it was like fire from the sky raining down upon us, I heard blood curdling screams, the man that had been next to me had been torn to shreds, I screamed in horror, and shock, knowing how close it had been, the horror of the poor man destroyed body was like something from a nightmare. Some mortar fire missed us, as we shattered the towers of the fort, others found their mark as hell rain down upon us once more, I felt like the luckiest person aboard, still alive, and not a scratch, I touch wood, as I thought this. Somehow despite the damage we managed to pull through, and remain afloat, but the sigh of relief again was on hold, as we had to storm the fort, on foot now.

We docked the ship, those with injuries that incapacitated them remained aboard, one crew member sought to the injured, the rest of the living crew came with us, I did not like being at the front of the assault with Shay, but I felt it was my duty to do so, as we charged among the ruins, it was difficult to see who lived, an who was skulking in the shadows, and smoke, but I managed to spot them before they saw me, plunging a swift blade through them, it still sickened me to feel the blade take them, but it was them, or me. When I was struggling to hold back one of the more skilled assassins, Shay came to my aid, pushing to blades through the unsuspecting man, the agony upon his face, was a terrifying image. Shay was an amazing fighter, when I was relegated to the side-lines, he cut down the remaining assassins with ease. the amount of blood split was saddening to bear witness to, so many bodies littered the ground.

Shay was climbing up to get the flag from the post, when I saw a rifleman loading, it took them much longer back then, so I raced over to him, barely in time to knock him to ground, as we scrambled up, he lunged the blade at me, he missed, but his glancing blow to the side of my head with the rifle was dead on, connecting harshly with my temple, the world spun for a moment, I regained my bearings, but he had the rifle set upon me, I did the only thing I could, closed my eyes, when the shot fired, I opened my eyes, as the soldier dropped to the ground, I saw Shay standing with a pistol, and the flag in hand, now I could breathe a sigh of relief, but only after the shaking subsided.
The return voyage

Chapter Summary

Alicia and Shay survived their mission, and now are heading home.

After escaping the fort with only a minor concussion, I counted myself lucky, as we walked back through the destruction, bodies littered the floor. And still despite my relief, it pained me to know I had aided in this attack, these men only doing their duty.

We returned to the ship, they cheered shays arrival, he bowed gracefully before laughing. Taking the helm we set sail back to New York, it wouldn't be long until I was home again, it felt strange to think of it as home. We had been sailing for a few hours, the crew singing one more, I was humming to myself, watching the waves lap at the side of the Morrigan, when Shay startled me by taking up beside me "what's that your humming?"

"Nothing" I lied, I did not have the will to explain pop music to Shay, he may lose faith in humanity, I giggled to myself.

"So your fighting skills are much improved, but I think you need to learn how to fire a pistol, as sometimes it's a necessity of battle, and can be quicker than a blade, would you like me to show you how?" His grin wide, as if he knew I would say yes.

Of course I did, as I was not familiar with past weaponry, it had been intended I come here, observe from a distance, live history, not take part in it, so it didn't seem necessary to train in self-defense, or olden day weaponry, but now I knew I had to learn, my life, and lives of others may depend upon it. My shot that hit poor Haytham's son had been misfired, my aim was more than off target, I still felt the guilt knowing I had taken a life, and taken a life that was meant to go on, forever changing history, and any good he may have done, I could only hope to do as much good in his stead, I sighed heavily. Turning to Shay who was showing off how quick his hand was with his pistol, it may me smile.

Shay made a show of flipping his pistols expertly into my hands; I was more than impressed but trying not to show it. He was a good teacher, and an adaptable fighter. I took the pistol in hand, aiming at the wreck of an old ship, aiming for the hull, but not hitting even close to my mark. "I don't even know where that went so I can't say how far off you were, but I am guessing miles" he laughed heartily.

"Very funny, I am not as good as you I get it" I snipped.

"Don't get cross with me, I was only joking" he added defensively, making me feel guilty, I knew he was light-hearted in demeanor, I just got frustrated when I didn't take to things as quickly as I would like, I found it embarrassing.

"I am sorry Shay, I guess I just wanted to impress, but feel very short of the mark, it's frustrating" "Trying to impress me aye, so I am forgiven for that misplaced blade"

"I wouldn't say that, but I find you to be a good mentor, your patient were I am not, it's a good balance"

"Quiet a compliment Alicia, you will be giving me an ego with such kind words"

"You don't have that arrogance, you have a charm to you, and good humor, makes you good company, it pains me to admit that"

"I am sure it does, come here I will help you steady your arm, but first watch me load it"

I watched him put in the gun power, bullet, then push it down with a metal rod. He rounded me, taking up behind me, placing his arm upon mine, he kicked my legs, widening my stance, steadying my hand "grip the trigger gently, now tell me what your aiming for be specific"

"The top of the broken mast on the left"

"OK, fire away" he released me, I hadn't been prepared for his sudden move so my aim skewed, hitting the hull.

"Well at least I saw where it hit this time, that's so far to the right, OK remain calm, reload, and we can try again"

It took me sometime to reload, I felt clumsy, as I spilled the gun powder, barely getting any in the chamber. I grumbled, and finally I got it. I lifted the pistol, Shay pulled closer this time, pressed against me, his breath close to my ear. Taking my hand guiding it to the trigger, holding me steady, the kickback forced me a little off the mark.

"See better already"

I turned around to quickly, Shay hadn't backed away yet, so I pressed against him, staring him in the eye, I felt that same awkward tension, I felt nervous, wondering what to say to break it, I felt lost for words. "Well" Shay jolted his arms off my waist, pulling back in a jerky motion "I should
get back to, you know, captain stuff"

With that he raced away, I fired several more shots on my own getting closer each time, but not quiet getting it before we set off again. All I could think of what Shays breathe upon my ear, and the heat of his body against mine, I shook off the thought, reminding myself of Haytham, and my growing affection for him.

When the night set in, I found myself tiered, I retired to the captain’s cabin, after checking with Shay, he seemed relieved to be rid of me, felt a bit upsetting to see, I had obviously made things awkward, and now he was weary, I didn't like it.

I dozed off quickly upon reaching the cot, I woke to hear shuffling around outside, I overheard a conversation not for my ears, as I walked toward the door "Look I understand you have an eye for the lass but don't be such a fool, she is a beauty, the grand masters sweet on her, and you know this"

"I know, but I can't help it, when I am around her, I want to kiss her, I know who her fella is, but still doesn't mean I am out of the running"

"He will kill you if you touch her"

"I don't intend to touch her, unless she invites me to do so" that seemed to be the end of the conversation, I wished I had not heard a word of it.

I felt terrible listening to what was not meant for my ears, uncomfortable by all it entailed, and worse still I was more than flattered to hear him say it, I felt the same, I was drawn to him, but I would do all I could to keep a friendly distance, I would not hurt Haytham, but I risked hurting Shay in the process, which made me uneasy.

I snuck back to the cot, trying my best to be silent, the boards creaked in protest, and alarm, I rushed back my heart beating heavily in my chest, I had to steady my breathing quickly as Shay popped his head in, I breathed deeply, trying not to reveal my conscious state.

Thankfully he returned to his duties, so I I relaxed, drifting back off, I had strange dreams about the future and all I had done to it.

I jolted up, to find Shay asleep upon the floor, the cold sweat clinging to my forehead, I pulled my legs over the edge, sitting up slowly, still feeling strange. I crept over to him, kneeling down, I squeezed his shoulder, I wanted him to take the cot, I would find no more rest tonight.

"Shay" I whispered. He didn't move "Shay" I said more loudly. He stirred, looking up at me through sleepy eyes "what is it?” He yawned.

"Take the cot, I cannot sleep any longer"

"Are you sure?” He pressed.

"Yes"

I helped him up, he stumbled toward the cot, and he fell back asleip almost the moment he touched the cot.

I washed up as best I could before stepping outside, the cold sweat clinging to my forehead, I pulled my legs over the edge, sitting up slowly, still feeling strange. I crept over to him, kneeling down, I squeezed his shoulder, I wanted him to take the cot, I would find no more rest tonight.

"Shay" I whispered. He didn't move "Shay" I said more loudly. He stirred, looking up at me through sleepy eyes "what is it?” He yawned.

"Take the cot, I cannot sleep any longer"

"Are you sure?” He pressed.

"Yes"

I helped him up, he stumbled toward the cot, and he fell back asleip almost the moment he touched the cot.

When we finally docked, I was the second to leave the ship, feeling it respectful to let the captain go first. Shay smiles holding out his hand, I could hardly refuse such a gentlemanly gesture, I took his hand to steady myself as I stepped off the Morrigan. Looking at her in all her glory once more "she is a fine vessel isn't she” Shay sated with such pride.

"She is, thank you for all you did for me, you saved my life” my sentiment was genuine. Shay was blushing again, so he quickly remarked. "Well we're even then, I almost took it, now I saved you, so that means surely the grudge has passed” he pressed.

"Yes I suppose I so” I added with a feigned reluctance.

I realized again I had not let go of his hand, and he had not released my hand, I quickly released it "sorry I keep forgetting to give that back” my cheeks flushed red.

"I don't mind, but like I said just ask” he winked.

We walked back to the tavern, talking and laughing like old friends, only the scar upon my shoulder recalled our past acquaintance. We walked in victorious, shay passed Haytham the flag and asked me for my report, and I may have been too enthusiastic in re telling, as Haytham narrowed his eyes, but for now he seemed happy to let Shay remain, granted I continue to watch his back. So he was still weary of him, but who could blame him, if he spent an ounce of the time I had with Shay that weariness would be more than gone, I enjoyed Shay’s company.

Later that evening, while we were making merrry, and talking of plans, I had sat down at the table first, and still ended up in the awkward position between Haytham, and Shay. Shay was regaling them with stories of our misadventure, amusing Thomas, and Charles, but Haytham seemed rather
poker faced, as he heard of another moment between me, and Shay, all of them amusing. Shay
was a great story teller, I guess it was our closeness that offended him somehow, we monopolized
the conversation, but I made sure to be attentive to Haytham without embarrassing him. As me,
and Shay laughed heartily, you could see there was a connection, that I was hoping would
become a wonderful friendship, as I so missed Corwin, his words of wisdom, his humor, a friend
would make me feel like I could survive such a time.

It was then a member of the crew walked in, I smiled, but my comfort so faded as he whispered in
Haythams ear, then called me aside into another room, I kept reminding myself I had not done
anything, and even so I felt so guilty, and worried of what I was walking into, I had to tell myself
to breath, this was like being called in by your boss, with we need to talk, but Haytham had
managed to instill the same panic wordlessly. I stepped into the room “Close the door would you”
he stated flatly. As I closed it, and heard the wood connect, I knew I had to turn back around, but I
was afraid to do so, clinging to the handle a moment too long, before slowly turning to face him.
Dreams, and nightmares take hold

Chapter Summary

Alicia finds out what Haytham has called her in for, events following test them both

Chapter Notes

TRIGGER WARNING - LOSS OF A CHILD IS A THEME IN THIS CHAPTER, IF THIS MAY TRIGGER YOU DO NOT READ ON.

As I cautiously took my seat next to Haytham, his eyes seemed to be weary, he was searching my face, as if to be sure of something, I was so on edge under his unfaltering gaze. Finally he sighed and took out letters from his hidden jacket pocket, placing them before me, his eyes imploring me to read, I was confused, but intrigued, I opened them with care, they detailed a plan for peace between the Templars and assassins, I felt amazed that he had chosen to trust me with such an idealistic, yet well thought through plan. I smiled as I finished reading, and never was I so sure that I had been right about him.

"So, what do you think?"

"I never took you for such a dreamer" I gave a wry smile "this is more than practical, it's genius"

"I knew it was an actionable plan"

"Can we not share it"

"No, other Templar's will not trust this vision, they thought they had burned them" he cautioned.

"Why would they do such a thing?"

"Some do not trust in the notion of peace, they see order as control, and power, these are dangerous people, power and ignorance"

"Why trust me?" I wondered aloud.

"I knew you would share my ideals, I can say no more than that"

That was an unusual answer "I will reveal this to no one"

"I knew I was right to trust you" he smiled warmly, as he relaxed.

"I will help you see it done, I promise you" I declared.

He looked at me in utter surprise, as if he had no expected such a fervent response, I pulled up from my chair, he pulled up slowly, I turned to leave assuming that was all there was to this, he grabbed my arm tightly, pulling me in to his arms, kissing me lovingly. As he pulled away he locked his eyes upon mine, holding my face "I am so glad to have you here"

My cheeks flushed, my eye contact dropped, he took my chin in hand, making me return to his gaze, this kiss was not sweet in intent, deep, and hungry as the desire took hold, his domination, and less than gentlemanly behavior was a thrill to witness, he dragged me free of the table, turning me away from him, as he unlaced my corset expertly, lifting me back to table top, forcing himself between my legs, pressing me to lean back, I leant upon my elbows taking in his lustful expression, drinking in each other's looks of appreciation.

He leant over me, kissing my stomach then pulling up to my breasts, he took my right breast in hand forcing a pleasures moan from my lips, my hard nipple was pained by the enjoyment of his harsh touch, he was encouraged by my lustful moans, grooping more harshly, I cried out vocally unintentionally, I took to biting my lip so our moment would remain as private as it could be.

 Upon seeing this he said in a hushed seductive tone "don't hold silent, I wish to hear how my touch pleases you"

"But they will hear us" I whispered.

"Good" he said will a large grin upon his face.

He returned to my right breast, taking the nipple into his mouth, sucking harshly, while teasing the nipple with his tongue, I abandoned my control, and began groaning at volume, as each lap of his
tongue delighted me, sending shivers through my body. I found myself groaning his name amid gasps of delight.

He took to my left breast with the same fervor, I could feel my sex throbbing, and wet from his touch. As he pulled up, I followed, sliding my hand under his trousers, taking hold of his growing erection, he gasped, I loosened my firm grip, tracing the shaft, teasing the head with my finger tips, he trembled, looking at me with a mix of encouragement, and confusion, as if no woman had been so forward before, this intrigued me, so I continued to tease his cock, until I could no longer wait, I wanted him inside me, I took control, he seemed so unsure of allowing me the lead, but I continued regardless.

I freed him of his trousers, removing mine with speed, sitting him down, hoping this chair could hold it, he crept in protest as I lowered myself to him, guiding his cock to my slick folds, taking him slowly, enjoying taking my time, feeling him fill me, I groaned with the friction, the look of surprise had vanished, replaced by a look of abandon, his eyes closed enjoying every sensation with a strangled groan, his ecstasy I could hear, and watch as I rode him with a slow controlled rhythm. He gripped my hips tightly as the pleasure grew, pushing him closer, and closer to the release we both desired.

I got more than carried away, I had never been so confident with a man before, I enjoyed the lack of self-consciousness, I slid my fingers down to my clit, teasing my self while pleasing him, his deep guttural groans aroused me and pushed me quickly over the edge into a heady orgasm, that lead to a loud, and lengthy cry of ecstasy.

As I tightened around him, I rode him harder reveling in the waves of pleasure that followed. His grip tightened upon my hips to the point of pain, but it was worth it to hear him cry out, shivering as his release made any motion from me send aftershocks of pleasure through him. Sweaty but more than satisfied, I held to him until we both came down from the high. He took a deep breath lifting his head to look me in the eye "that was an unexpected delight" he smiled.

I was beginning to feel my confidence slowly fading, feeling a bit embarrassed by taking control, he was not accustomed to women so forward, I always found I forgot the age I was in, but it had been the best orgasm of my life. We began to redress, I had to button my coat up tight as now my top was in tatters "ah yes, I didn't think about that" he chuckled. He aided me to put this nightmare contraption of a corset back on. We both walked back to the celebrations, sharing knowing looks, my cheeks strained from the frequency of my smiles, whether it was Shays jokes, or Haytham's stare, I could not stop smiling.

The celebrations, and welcome of Shay ran late, his initiation was moving, it was strange to be one of the faces already at the table, hearing him recite the pledge, and Haytham accept him was an strangely satisfying feeling, I felt a mix of pride and hope, things were changing for the better.

I took to work behind the scenes unaware of what the other Templar's were doing, these efforts toward peace were sadly very disheartening, any assassin would rather stab me in the back than hear what I had to say. After months I became weary, nothing was progressing and I only felt exhaustion, all hope was fading away.

I returned to Haytham with bad news, I had hoped to bring him good news, his face dropped as I told him of my travels, and trials. He became very somber, before asking for my aid with the riots breaking out in the colony, we were to incite rather than prevent the riots, I found this a strange tactic, but I followed him, holding to my faith in him, as that was the only faith I had left. The sense of unease was palpable as we walked the streets, the riots soon started, guards were set upon, gun fire cried out in response, but soon overwhelmed they fell, soon the guards thinned, and their presence became less, and less, being in the middle of the dirty work was no less difficult, the guilt, the fear as each pistol sounded, and it was difficult to see where it was aimed in the commotion, always made my heart jump, when I could see all members of the group were safe I relaxed.

The last riot was the worst, as there was a guard on his own, and they surrounded him like a hungry pack of wolves, he knew this was to be his end, as he faded from view, his cries of agony cut through me, my eyes misted over as I struggled to hold back, as to intercede now would only prolong his agony, or so I told myself. He managed to fire a shot from his pistol, as the shot rang out, and everyone was left standing, we thought no more of it.

I found an agony rush over me, I dropped to my knees, I felt like something was tearing out of me, and I screamed through the pain, it was long lasting, after an agonizing hours, I still had no idea what had occurred, all I knew, and Haytham knew was I had not been shot. I was lying down, the remnants of pain radiated through me, tears coursed down my cheeks, when it occurred to me, I jolted up, and despite the pain, I held bolt upright, staring into space, I had been pregnant, how had I not even considered this, I hadn’t even thought of it, no wonder I was exhausted, and I complained, and in pain for days, I had just thought the high stress was wearing upon me, I hadn’t even thought of it, was this my fault, so many questions, and fears ran through my mind, I had never wanted kids but now I felt a strange sense of loss floor me, I stared at the ceiling for hours, unable to move, or sleep, just in what felt like a daze.

I remained frozen in time for a time, unable to process the idea, I still couldn’t believe it, it felt so strange, each day passed in a blur, people were talking to me, but they felt miles away. When I snapped back it was worse than that numb feeling, the pain wracked my body, with my sobs.

“Please tell me what’s wrong?” Haytham pleaded.

I looked to his gentle face, not sure how to say such a thing, as how do you approach such suffering, I looked at him, barely able to hold eye contact, soon my eyes split forth tears, and I stuttered out the words “I was pregnant, I have lost them” the words were like bile, they burned my throat as I spoke them.
His expression became stony, speechless he just sat there, he didn’t move nor did I. I dropped my head unable to look at him any longer, this was my fault, it had to be, how could I have not realized. Eventually he took me in his arms, holding to me tightly, I could tell he was crying silently as I felt a drop hit my cheek, it was tearing me apart. He stayed with me until, I felt able to pull myself up, and face the world again, he was a great support to me, we spent days talking, each us blaming ourselves, and how despite neither of us wanting children, it felt like grief, plenty of sorrow filled days, we pushed through it, we were far from healing but I felt I had to pull out of this dark hole, least I bury myself in it.

It was at this point that Haytham cried “That’s it I can’t do this anymore!”

I had no idea what he meant but he stormed off, I was in pursuit of him, but he was too enraged to notice, even when I called after him, he would not stop, so I followed on in silence, unaware of his meaning, where he was going, my fears told me, he meant he could no longer be with me, it was too painful for him, this panic compelled me to follow, and the moment he paused, I would try and reason with him.
The truth is revealed

Chapter Summary

Alicia finds out the reason behind Haytham's anger

It was a long trek, I was working on nerves, and adrenaline, it kept me going despite worrying about what I would find, so many worst case scenarios ran through my head, as followed him, I could barely breath as some of them frightened me so.

He pulled up to a mansion, you would have thought it abandoned, the windows were boarded up, but as he barged through the front door, I could only assume the boards were for secrecy rather than lack of use, I slipped in behind him, pulling out of sight, I had learned enough to be stealthy. I watched from the shadows, as Haytham cried out “I know you’re here, get out here, and speak to me”

I thought he meant me, my heart lurched, as his tone was angry, what had I done to provoke such a response, he must blame me, I held my hand to my mouth to stifle a gasp, thinking I had stumbled upon a cold realization.

It was then my biggest shock occurred, I heard a voice I recognized, it couldn’t be I reasoned, but as the man responding with an order “calm down, then we can talk”

He came into view, it was Cole, I was completely confused, my mouth was open in shock, my eyes agog, I wanted to pull from the shadows, and ask for an explanation, but I used every ounce of restraint to hold still, I would only hear the truth if I overheard it, I felt any trust I had fading.

“I will not keep up this charade any longer”

“We thought you believed in the order”

“I do, but I can’t hurt her like this”

“You weren’t supposed to have a relationship, you’re the one who broke those rules, she was put here to aid in the remaking of the Templar’s”

“She has done so, but I cannot keep lying to her, she doesn’t deserve this, aren’t you supposed to be her friend?”

“She was a piece of the puzzle, nothing more, I chose her, as I knew you two would get along, and work well together, you were supposed to keep things professional, my ancestor asked me for help, and I found someone willing to take those steps, and you have literally fucked it up, god damn it, we will need to do some damage control, can you pass her off to anyone, keep her out of the way for a while?”

“I don’t think you are listening to me, I will not lie to her anymore”

“Fine, I will sort it out myself, if you weren’t integral to our plans I would kill you myself”

“You could try” Haytham warned.

This whole argument meant that my entire life had been a lie, Cole used me, Haytham used me, and now I was a problem, I knew I would regret this, but as my entire life crumbled before my eyes, I was devastated, but I was also enraged, how dare they do this to me, make me a pawn in their little game, before I could stop myself I spat out in my rage “How could you?” I pointed accusingly first at Cole, then turning to Haytham would looked surprised, and ashamed by my presence “And you” I snapped at him “What did I do to you to deserve being used, I have been through hell with you, and I thought that, I thought…” I began to lose steam, and the will to say I loved him, so I held my tongue too late, but I et my accusations hang in the air, I was hoping for answers, but the silence followed by a call for guards told me, that Cole did not care to explain himself to me, and Haytham looked so destroyed that he was rendered speechless.

As Cole’s thugs ran at me, I bolted for the exit, there was no time for answers, I was now a danger to his plans, I knew too much, they would want me dead, I didn’t have time to process any of this, as I ran as fast as my legs could manage, which was faster than I imagined, I tore through new York like the devil was on my heels, I found myself running toward the dock, not knowing what had drawn me here.

I had no idea who I could trust, who was in on it, maybe it was everyone, but if I remained out in the open, I was a target, so I caught sight of the Morrigan, and I leapt on board, as the boat was a little away from the dock, I charged into the darkness of the captains quarters, pulling into a corner, I finally broke down, but I cried a silent anguish, as I had no wish to be found by anyone. My mind was racing, I couldn’t believe Cole had manufactured a friendship with me just to use me, and I felt ill at the thought of Haytham using me, he had acted like he trusted me, acted like he cared, and loved me, obviously not, all of my good memories became bitter and twisted with their betrayals.

I hid in the darkness for hours, unable to move, and unable to consider my next move, I could not return to Haytham, and I had to leave New York, if Shay did not have any need to leave New York within the next few hours, I would have to find another ship, and hope their captain was
When we reached the Arctic, I stepped off the ship, face covered, and in furs, so no one could tell but desperately needing someone to trust, someone to hold me, and tell me it would be OK. It was difficult to let go, there was so many conflicting needs, wanting to keep everyone at arm's length, time I held away, only a few times had he wrestled me into it, once he embraced me, I found it.

He rarely succeed, I felt guilty to see his disappointment, but I couldn't get passed all of the emotion, raging around in my head. He often offered to hold me to keep me warm, most of the time I had protested, but the biting cold became painful, so I had to don it, despite my reservations. It kept me warm enough, Shay when he wasn't at the Helm tried to entertain me, make me laugh, just wanted solitude, and I got plenty of it. I didn't want to trust him, but I had no choice, so I pulled under the table out of sight from both sides, unless you were to check under the table. I heard Shay yell “No sign, we will have to keep looking”

As I heard footsteps re-enter the room, I held my breathe as I saw boots draw level with me, I gasped as they dropped down, my heart pounded heavily, but thankfully it was only Shay. “Stay here, I will be back soon” he whispered. “You can trust me” he implored as he squeezed my shoulder; I knew he meant well, but my trust had been so badly shaken it was difficult to hear the word trust, never mind actually doing so.

I stayed under the table for fear of being discovered, my muscles were already aching, what difference would a few more hours make, I stared at the ground for the entire time he was gone, still not wanting to think, as my train of thought was leading down a dark, and disturbing road, too many unanswered questions made the fear stronger, as for the things I knew, they were bad enough, never mind considering what I didn't know. They a shock cut through me when I realised I had my communicator on me, I did not want to go outside but they could track me with it if they had brought anything with them, or someone else communicated with Cole.

I crept out, my muscles stiff, and difficult to move, but I struggled forward slowly, cautiously, and clumsily due to the pain, a tore my communicator from my ear, and launched it into the sea after assuring myself no one was lurking. I crept back into my hiding place, glad but saddened by losing my last real connection to my own time, I was now stuck here, unless Cole's guards found me, then I would be dead, known in history as a traitor to her country, and a traitor to the Templars, it would be called justice.

Shay returned as promised, coming in and helping me out from under “Look I have a mission in the Arctic, I was supposed to be meeting Haytham, but I will tell the crew you in his place”

“They won’t believe that, they will have been told I am a traitor, they won’t trust me” I cried.

“I am only bringing men I trust so I can assure them I do not believe it, have a little faith”

“You have no idea how much you’re asking of me”

“What do you mean?”

“I have been betrayed by Haytham, and my best friend, I don’t know who I can trust, and if I can trust”

He sighed heavily “I am sorry to hear that, do you trust me enough to hug you?” he asked cautiously, while holding his arms out.

I didn’t say a word, I just pulled into his arms, I didn’t care if a blade stabbed through my back, I just needed to feel anything but, doubt, and confusion, I was so lost. As he took me in his arms, he held to me tightly, stroking my hair, trying to soothe me, it didn’t work, but I felt thankful that he had tried. I smiled weakly as I pulled away. “For now you can stay in here, and the moment we reach the site, I will give you something you can cover up in, so they will hopefully think nothing of it”

I nodded, thinking about hiding to avoid taunts of traitor, and the chance of the crew turning on me, made me feel more isolated, and the lack of life present at our destination would be a welcome change, I had always been a people person, but I guess that’s what made me so gullible, seeing the best in those with nothing good within them, I had just wanted it to be different.

We were days into our voyage, I still had no idea why we were going there, but I didn’t care, I just wanted solitude, and I got plenty of it, the only problem was that it often left me alone with my thoughts. Weeks passed, and I began to grow closer, Shay had given me a fur coat to wear, at first I had protested, but the biting cold became painful, so I had to don it, despite my reservations.

It kept me warm enough, Shay when he wasn’t at the Helm tried to entertain me, make me laugh, he rarely succeed, I felt guilty to see his disappointment, but I couldn’t get passed all of the emotion, raging around in my head. He often offered to hold me to keep me warm, most of the time I held away, only a few times had he wrestled me into it, once he embraced me, I found it difficult to let go, there was so many conflicting needs, wanting to keep everyone at arm’s length, but desperately needing someone to trust, someone to hole me, and tell me it would be OK.

When we reached the Artic, I stepped off the ship, face covered, and in furs, so no one could tell
who I was under all of it, as we made a treacherous climb, I heard a faint sound behind us, I
turned to see Haytham, a pistol pointed at me.

I knew that a good Templar would accept their fate, but why did they send him for me, and why
did he accept. The betrayal was too much to bare "why did it have to be you?" I cried in anguish,
removing the material covering my face.

"Because I know you better, only I would find you"

"Don’t do this, let them send another"

"I must do this, they will know if I showed mercy, they have the history books, I do not want to
do this, you deserve better"

"I thought you were better"

I turned to look to Shay for support, to fins him gone, he had left me to my fate, this had been a set
up, they had brought me to this cold isolated place to die alone, and a traitor.
Chapter Summary

what will Haytham decide is more important?

Haytham’s eyes became glassy with tears threatening to fall, as I turned back to him, his pistol hand unsteady in the cold. I never would know if he had intended to kill me, or merely frighten me away as at that moment Shay knocked him unconscious.

"Didn’t see me coming this time aye, you didn’t think I would let harm come to you, I know you don’t know who to trust?, but you can trust me”.

Shock, and rush of relief to see Shay swoop in, but I still felt the torment of the betrayal, I couldn’t believe Haytham would do this to me, it took all my strength to walk away, but as I began to walk away, I felt compelled to turn back, running over to where Haytham lay, I knelt next to him, kissed his forehead, and whispered “I really did love you” my voice cracked with emotion. I followed Shay, aiding him on his mission, glad for the distraction, forcing me to focus on anything but the agony of both Cole, and Haytham’s betrayal.

I kept watch over Shay, and any man, or woman who tried to get the jump upon him, I lost site of him, as the ground rumbled beneath my feet, I panicked, I wanted to follow on to make sure Shay was safe, but the way he had gone was crumbling, it killed me to run, keeping ahead of the fracturing ice was exhausting, but I knew my life depended upon me getting across, one final leap to where we had began, Haytham was gone, I looked around to assure myself he was not lurking about, nothing but ice fields as far as the eye could see. I held in place, breathing a heavy sigh of relief upon seeing Shays as be it broken expression.

“Shay?, what is it?” I pleaded.

“Nothing, let us leave this god forsaken place” he demanded with a strangled emotion.

“Nothing, let us leave this god forsaken place” he demanded with a strangled emotion.

I wanted to press him, but I thought better of it, I would ask him again at a later time, whatever burden he now carried, I would not allow him to carry it alone, I would see to it that I was his support when he should need it.

After the artic was destroyed, along with the assassin order, I retreated into solitude, falling into silence for days, when Shay barged in to the room, holding his hands up in the air “I cant take this anymore, he did not betray you, well not in the way you imagine, we orchestrated the whole thing, he had to be the one to take the job, another would have pulled the trigger without hesitation, he had no intention of hurting you, he was not unconscious, he was faking it, and I hate to say this, as it makes me a bit sick to my stomach, but he loved you, that’s why he wanted to stop the lies, that’s why he trusted you”

I could barely believe what Shay was saying, I just stared at him blankly, frustrated, Shay stormed back out. Slowly it began to sink in, Haytham had been once again protecting me, I couldn’t believe it, now I knew, there was nothing I could do about it, I was a traitor, I would be shot on sight, and he would be killed for not finishing his job should I be revealed.

A mission had me and Shay in New York, I was the lookout upon the rooftop, I was more agile, and a better fighter, months had passed, once our mission was complete, hadn’t expected to see him, after all this time, it was Haytham, I paid a local thug to knock into him and say simply “She knows” in their angry exchange. As the Thug walked away, whistling the quickest, and easiest money he had ever made I am sure. Haytham looked up, I knew he was searching for me.

I wanted to run down to him in that moment, but I knew if I did he would be a dead man. So I stood still like a statue, digging my nails into my palms in my quiet desperation. "Alicia”

"Yes?” I turned to shay.

"We have to go, don’t make me regret telling you the truth”

"I know, can I just have one more minute”

"Fine, stare at the back of his head for all I care” he cried in frustration.

I felt guilty holding on to my love for Haytham, as Shay had been so good to me, but I just wanted to say goodbye even if it couldn’t be to his face. I had felt enough sadness for one day, I turned running into a wall, I was so sure that chimney was further away, I guess I wasn’t thinking. I looked up to realise it was not a wall but a person “shay, I told you I...”

It was not Shay, it was Haytham, I was now lost for words, I had so many things to say to him, and I couldn’t think of a one. He took the lead as I stood dazed, kissing me with a bitter sweet passion, I knew I would not be allowed to share with him again. I cried tears of pain, and joy, holding to him tightly.

Before he turned to leave he took my face in his hands and held me in an intense stare "I love you, and it is agonizing to walk away, but you know why I must, I don’t want to say the words, but one of has to, goodbye my love, I won't forget you"
I grabbed his wrist before he left, and finally told him all I had wanted and needed to “Do you recall the dream you shared with me, well I shall see to it that it comes true, I will never stop fighting for you even if it's behind the scenes, when things go your way against all odds know that it is me, and I love you more than you know, this is agony, but I will not give them an excuse to hurt you”

It was his turn to be speechless, his eyes shone with tears, with that he vanished, knowing if we didn't pull away now, we wouldn't be able, my heart ached.

I followed Shay found him hiding behind a wall, he jumped out and called out “boo”

I feigned being startled, and smiled weakly “that bad?” He said seeing my pain "come here” he took me in his arms, and waiting until my breathing steadied. Pulling away, he held out his hand to me “let's go”

I took his hand knowing this would be a different chapter for me, I cast my eyes back and wished things were different, but they were not, so I grasped his hand “Shay do not believe that I am not thankful for all you have done for me”

“Don't start getting soppy in me now” he joked.

"I will do as I please“ I smiled.

"Yes you always do"
Shay and Alicia

Chapter Summary

Shay, and Alicia move forward behind the scenes, restoring order, but they are about to encounter an unexpected complication.

A new force within the dark criminal underworld was gaining power, and prestige, with the other Templar's otherwise unavailable, myself and Shay took to their hide out.

We held back listening to their idle chatter, knowing there were too many and armed, we had to assess the situation, break the group up, and take them out. I nodded to Shay, we had our own code now, whistles for help, and signals should things go wrong, Shay had always told me to run should this occur, I would always retort "I will not let anything happen to you, I will not leave you behind, you know I do what I please."

He would smile, raise his eyes and mock stage a storm off, he could always make me laugh, even when I didn't feel I could. We over heard their next heist was in two days, plenty of time to track the members, and thin the herd. We took to the roof tops, were we spent most of our time, out of sight, over looking the world, a world we shaped but rarely got to be a part of, me for being a traitor, and Shay would not leave my side, no matter how I begged.

We found a nice roof with a flat square in the middle, more comfortable than tiles, I looked up at the evening sky, I did wonder how Haytham was doing, I always wanted to speak to him, write to him, but I could not risk it, but I had wrote him letters none I planned to send but it kept me out of my own head for a moment, allowing that love, pain and confusion a voice.

I turned to Shay who was also looking up at the sky "what are you thinking?"

"You don't want to know, trust me"

"I would, anything you think I would value"

"Sweet of you to say, but I am not ready to talk about it, I know you have been patient with me, but I just can't"

"I understand" I squeezed his shoulder. "To change the subject then, why don't you rejoin the order as a full agent, get to be a part of this world we are working so hard to protect"

"Do I have to repeat myself again, I won't leave your side, and to be honest your one of the few I trust with my life, so why would I choose second rate company"

I loved his way with words, I smiled widely, my smile reached my eyes, he smiled back. I leant my head up his shoulder, he wrapped his arm around my waist. We stayed there until the cold became too much to fed off without getting uncomfortably close. We both seemed quite unsure as to what we were to each other, we expressed affection often, we flirted but never crossed that invisible line, I knew my love for Haytham had not faded, but I didn't believe it ever would, did I have room for another in my heart was what I often wondered.

We had accommodation booked in his name, I would sneak in through the window he left wide open. "Shay, one bed again?" I wagged my finger at him "if I didn't know better, I would think you were trying to get me into bed" I teased.

His cheeks flushed, he couldn't have looked more uncomfortable, I had to ease the tension. "Shifts again?, or shall I take the floor, only fair as you took it last time"

He looked as if he wanted to say something before thinking better of it. I cocked my head to the side regarding him silently, I wondered what was going on in his head, and what caused the nightmares, I often heard him him call out a name in anguish, and a simple whisper of 'i am sorry' followed, before he fell silent.

He took the bed after some protest, I took to the floor, reminded me of the morrigan, I dozed off rather quickly, only to again wake up to hear Shay battling some powerful inner demons. This time he didn't calm down, his distress was all to clear to me. I couldn't watch this again, I pulled up off the floor, inched in beside him, running my fingers through his hair, gently waking him. His eyes flashed open, he seemed confused for a moment "shay, your safe, I am here for you"

Words barely covering whatever haunted him, but it was all I could think to say. He lay still "what are you doing?" He whispered.

"Me?, I was cold, you don't mind do you?"

I thought I would save him the explanation he wasn't ready to give, and to stop me from asking, "No I don't mind" he whispered.

I placed my arms around him, at first he was rigid, and asked "what's this for??"

"Shut up, you know I do as I please, so just let me do this"

His feeble protests fell upon deaf ears, he finally relaxed, embracing me, I stroked his hair gently,
he shook with silent tears, I knew it was not the cold, but I pretended as though it was, and the next day I said nothing of it. He was grateful despite not saying so, it was in his eyes as he smiled, to lighten the mood he added "see it worked didn't it?, got you in to bed"

"Yes, your irresistible charm won me over"

"Bloody hell if I knew that was all it took, I would have tried sooner" his wry grin, cocky yet adorable.

"We have work to do" I stopped him before he played upon it further.

"Yes indeed we do"

We separated, taking out gang members hassling good hard working people, so no one reported us, as they were just glad to see them dealt with. Word had spread by the afternoon as they began walking in threes, with an additional look out, the roof top look out was easy, but the three bandits together, we're harder to avoid a commotion with, I could not be caught, I almost was twice, as they called out, several bit my hand so they could scream. I still was not at ease taking a life, but this gang was full of murders, rapists, and sick men, so I did not like it, but my conscience found justification, so I was still able to sleep at night, just not so soundly.

Between the two of us we hit them pretty hard, so much so the 2nd in command took to the streets to call us out of hiding, assassins in the shadows he called us, I took offence to being called an assassin. We would have dismissed his ramblings, but it seems while we were taking out their men, they were taking hostages, and we're now threatening to kill them should we not turn our selves over to them.

"You kill one more of our men, and I will blow this little ladies brains upon the street" he spat, revealing in her fear.

We had killed one to many, me and Shay met up were we had intended, in an abandoned building, on the outskirts of town. "Shit Shay what do we do?"

"I will go and say I worked alone, you save the hostages"

"Are you mad, they will kill you on sight, I will have more of a chance at surviving"

"You can't be known to be alive remember"

"Shit, your right, but I can't let you do that, it's too dangerous"

"Come on, you trust me don't you"

"Yes, but..."

"It's sorted then" he cut me short. "Do I get a kiss for luck?" He smiled.

I kissed his cheek quickly not lingering a second too long "thought you made your own luck" I smiled.

"I do that, but having you watching over me is a grand bonus"

We began walking toward were they had the hostages, Shay walked among them holding up his hands, one of them cracked him across the head. It took all I had not to pull the trigger. The 2nd stopping him "the boss wants to see him" he warned.

"But he killed so many of our men" he argued.

"He will pay when the boss says, not before" he hissed. The bandit backed down, dragging Shay to his feet, I tailed them, the moment I knew the location, I returned to slip among the hostages, I cut almost all of them free, when I was caught "fucking bitch, fine you will have to do, one is better than none"

He pushed me forward "where are we going? I cried with a feigned panic.

"You love are going to meet the boss, he said he wanted a select few, and your our volunteer, teach you to do a good deed won't it"

He pushed me again, I could not have planned this better I thought, I marched forward, pushed into a warehouse, down into its basement level, in the glow of lanterns, I could see Shay bound, being held in place. He pushed me into the waiting circle. The 2nd looked at me before glaring at his minion "that the only one you brought?"

"Yes, this little bitch was freeing the hostages, be thankful I caught her, better than empty handed"

"Hmm I suppose so" he growled.

"When's the boss coming then?"

"In a moment, patience" he cautioned.

He walked over to me, circling me "hmm she is a pretty one, shame that we will have to break her neck, got to make a statement to the do goods, don't mess with us, you will be sorry love, when I get my hands on you you'll cry for death" he hissed.

I pretended to be afraid, as I knew that's what he wanted "please don't hurt me, I was only trying
to help” I cried, I continued to rant in a panicked manner, it was believable, he slapped me harshly across the face, I hit the ground with the force of it, I would make him regret it later, we had to know who was in charge first. I backed away from him, as I backed away the skirt caught on something, I hated long skirts but I had to look the part “well the legs on this one” the 2nd growled. He was walking over with a twisted look upon his face, his eyes dropping to my legs, I dragged the stupid skirt back over my legs “no no love I was enjoying the view”

He flicked out a knife, Shay was pleading with me to let him make a move, I shook my head, just as he leant over me, a voice declared “jack, back away from our guest”

I knew that voice, but it couldn't be, a hand stuck out, I grasped it pulling up to my feet, dusting myself before being faced by Charles Lee, he had certainly fallen from grace, what had put him here, and now he knew I lived, what that meant I would soon discover.
In the middle

Chapter Summary

Alicia feels torn, as things become complex

“Alicia?!, is that you?” He sounded happy to see me, which given the circumstances confused me.

“Charles, what happened?”

“Your boy Haytham happened, a lot of the policies I tried to enforce never saw the light of day, and soon I found myself a disgraced politician, and it was all his doing, so I am going to do what I can to destroy his naive vision, and you are the perfect weapon”

“Weapon?”

“Yes if the Templar's discover that you are alive, they will know he chose you over his duty to them, and they will kill him, I will reveal in his downfall, and you can be a witness to my revenge”

“You know I won’t help you do this”

“I hate to do this to you Alicia, but I am not asking”

“Charles, I am not who I once was, do not test me, I do not wish to hurt you, but given your plans, you know I can’t let you live, I promised to protect him, and his dream, whether you think it naive or not, I believe in him, and I know of the policies of which you speak, and you can’t blame him for not allowing your hate to destroy the integrity of the order”

“You both fools, Kill him, bring her Alive”

He turned to walk away, I went to give chase when I saw more guards charge in, I couldn’t leave Shay, he would be over run, I ran to his side “Alicia go and stop Lee”

“I will not leave you”

“That’s sweet of ya, but he sounds twisted up, he will be shouting his mouth off”

“Without me, he has nothing”

The guards had surrounded us, we turned to face them, taking a fighting stance, they rushed us in numbers, for each hit they managed to sneak through, I managed to kill one of them, once they saw the hidden blade, all bets were of they picked up whatever weapons were available to them, and tried again, this time I had to be more weary. I managed to duck, and evade the bat swinging for my head, and the blade jabbing for my gut, taking the blade across their throats swiftly.

The numbers had thinned enough, I was about to go after Charles, when his 2nd in command made his presence known, cracking me over the head with something solid and heavy, the room was spinning from the strength of the blow, I could not steady my sight, I crawled out of his reach, rolling out of the way of a crashing blow meant for my head. I kicked him, but I was off the mark due to my impaired vision. He grabbed my foot, wrenching it, I cried out in pain, as the tendons strained to near breaking point as the join was turned at such an unnatural angle.

“Stupid bitch, if Charles didn’t need you alive, I would kill you right now, but bosses orders” with that he released my leg, grabbing my collar pulling me up, he drew his fist back, he stopped dead, as a blade appeared through his chest, the blood bubbled over his lips, as the blade wrenched free, he dropped to the ground.

“Thank you Shay, what would I do without you”

He helped me up “You wouldn’t get far without me love” he smiled.

“Shit he is so far ahead of us now, and I can’t leap from building to catch up” I winced placing my leg straight.

“Take this” it was an unusual weapon, like a dart but mechanized.

“What’s this?”

“Well in a pinch, you can use this, it cuts through a man with ease, and at distance”

“I don’t think Charles deserves such an indignity”

“That’s why it’s a last ditch attempt, just in case, but I will gladly do this for you”

“No Shay, this has to be me, he doesn’t know that I stopped the majority of his twisted policies seeing the light of day, not Haytham, I caused this, so I will see it done”

I limped away, slowly being able to walk but not at pace, I took to the rooftops carefully, I managed to catch up with Charles, and he was in a crowded street, I wondered why he was just
standing out in the open, when I saw Haytham emerge from the town house.

“Ah here he is” he declared

“Charles, what an unpleasant surprise, your causing a scene” I heard Haytham snap.

“Your business partners will want to hear this one, calls into question your loyalty”

They seemed shocked, holding close to hear Charles out, so even if they thought his ravings mad, he would place doubt in their minds, I hated to do this given Haytham’s proximity, and that they used to be friends, I did not wish for it to be so public, but I had no choice.

I took aim, and before the words could leave his lips, the arrow pierced his throat, I dragged him away from the group, dragging him up, I strained to hold him, as he flailed wildly “Forgive me Charles” I whispered.

“Up there” someone cried.

“An assassin?, I thought they had been dealt with” a man hissed.

“Deal with it”

“Gladly” I heard Haytham proclaim.

That was the second time, I had been mistaken for an assassin, I dropped the rope, and tried to run, but my leg gave way, I slipped falling down the side of the roof, I grabbed the ledge just in time, but now I was hanging precariously off the edge of a building, with my strength failing me. I tried pulling up but I couldn’t, and if I dropped down, my leg would only get much worse, then I wouldn’t be running anywhere.

I felt a foot crushing my fingers, I tried to hold my silence, I hadn’t wanted Haytham to know it was me, but the pain running through my fingers was too much, “God damn it Haytham stop”

“How do you know my name?”

“How do think?” I used my last ounce of strength to remove the hood covering my face.

He jolted his foot away, grabbing my hand quickly, pulling me up “I can’t stay long, that was a very public act of stupidity, why in god’s name would you do such a thing?”

“He was threatening you, Shay and I were trying to end a criminal organisation, and we were trying to discover their leader, and it was Charles, he said he was going to tell the Templar’s how disloyal you were, I couldn’t allow it”

“You really are my little guardian angel aren’t you” he smiled, brushing my hair away from my face. I trembled as his fingers traced my cheek. He leant forward to kiss me, I wanted him to, but I couldn’t, I stopped him.

“I can’t”

“I see” he added in a hurt tone.

“No you don’t, it’s too painful, if I can’t be with you, kissing you now only drags out my agony, you know I love you, and that I want to be with you more than anything, but we can’t”

He growled “I hate that you’re right” he paced deep in thought, then stopping he added “You have to give me your cloak, some unfortunate shall take your place, I have to give them something”

I handed him my cloak, realizing that I could possibly be seen, he took his hat from his head, placing it upon mine, every exchange was tense, the tension was becoming too much, so I had to stumble away slowly, trying not to look back, but holding tightly to the hat upon my head, never wanting to lose this piece of him. Now the Templar’s would have to believe the assassins had resurfaced, and that would mean myself and Shay would have to be even more alert, and ironically for the very people we were helping.

I found Shay at the border of town “Fucking hell Alicia, you could not have made that a more public spectacle, be thankful they sent Haytham for you, Jesus Christ, never do that to me again, I could have managed those thugs, but no you always know better don’t you”

“No I don’t know better, I am just trying to protect those who mean a lot to me, and yes I don’t always go about it in the right way, but I cant help it, I want you to be safe, and I want that for Haytham”

“Okay, okay, maybe I am just a bit het up, I will calm me self” he sighed heavily. “So how was it seeing him?”

“Painful, that feeling of when you want someone, and you know it just can’t happen”

“Ai, I know the feeling” he empathized. “So where are we calling home tonight?”

“No idea”

“I will go and look around for somewhere close by, I will be back soon”

I nodded, watching him dash of somewhere. I heard footsteps creeping behind me, I turned
blade in hand “God damn it Haytham, are you insane?, were you followed?”

“No”

“Why are you here?”

“I needed to tell you something, I did not at all agree with you earlier”

“You came out here to tell me that” I cried “Your insane”

He scooped me into his arms, kissing me, it was a lingering, passionate kiss, neither wanting it to end, he was an amazing kisser, always made my knees weak. When we broke the kiss, we were both breathless, his eyes locked upon mine, before he pulled me into an embrace “Damn it, you were right, this only makes it more difficult, when I wake up without you, I will struggle to recall why, and I will wonder where you are, then I remember, I should walk away from you, and never contact you again, nor try to, I need to let you go, I don’t want to hurt you anymore, but I don’t want to let you go, my life was simpler before I met you”

I found my cheeks were wet, I hadn’t realized I was crying, my eyes had been closed while I held to him, I looked up at him, his gentle eyes grew sad when he saw my tears “If I ever contact you again, it will be because I have found a way we can be together, I will never stop trying”

I felt a strange sense of hope, as he walked away, Shay came back, to say he had found an abandoned house, it was drafty, so we would at least be warm, as a gust of wind played about the trees, I found myself clinging to the hat upon my head like it was my only treasured possession, recalling the kiss fondly. I never told Shay that Haytham came out to me that night, I am not sure why I held to my silence.
Shay loses his cool

Chapter Summary

Shay loses his temper, causing Alicia to re-think

"You seem a little bit quiet Alicia"

"Hmm"

"Your normally talking my ear off, are you okay?" Genuine concern with a tinge of sarcasm.

I took my time before I responded "I guess killing is never easy, but when you knew that person, and once called them brother, to execute him in such a manner, I feel ashamed, I literally stabbed him in the back"

I had no great love for Charles, he believed in the cause just like the rest of us, but he let cruel personal agendas dark his mind. The manner of his death was haunting me, stringing him up, feeling him pull for dear life. I was also wondering about Haytham, I felt he had reignited the flame, and now it was all could do to not talk about him.

As I turned back to Shay, his broken expression worried me "dear god what is it?" I pleaded desperately.

"I had to kill my brother, and many I once called friends, I still see their faces, and hear their words, traitor they called me" his voice cracked with emotion.

"Is this the burden you have be bearing?"

He nodded, his eyes glassy "Shay, that sounds like you had to make many difficult decisions, but you are no traitor, you did what you did following your conscience, your a good man never doubt it"

He didn't seem convinced, I pulled him into my arms "trust me, as I trust you, I know you"

He returned my embrace, as he pulled away I held his face in my hands, such a sweet face, scared with the trails of life. His evasive eye contact became a stare fixed upon me, he looked lost, the next thing I knew I was in a lip lock with him, he was so gentle, and tender, it was heart breaking to have to pull away, but I couldn't let this happen, it may have crossed my mind many times, but with Haytham's promise ringing in my ears, I was unable to open my heart to Shay.

I pulled away "I can't"

Shay pulled up, and went to turn away "wait, I understand what you're thinking but..."

"You understand?, you haven't got a fucking clue have you, you're like a Doe eyed teenager, all he had to do was smile and your hooked again, and now I will have to pick up the pieces again when you realise he isn't coming back!"

"You don’t know that, I thought you believed in the Templar's, he is making the world a better place"

"God you don't believe in the Templar's, you believe in him, can you hear yourself, if he loves you he should give it up for you, you should be what makes his world a better place"

"I couldn't ask him to do that" I seethed.

"Of course not" he threw his hands in the air.

"Haven't you ever been in love?" I tried to reason with what felt like unwarranted anger.

"Yes, fucking fool that I am, I am in love with a stupid woman who is obsessed with another man"

“What?” I asked taken back by his response.

“Are you blind Alicia!!” He cried.

I was stunned into silence, my eyes dropping to the ground, I heard Shay storm away, I had hoped to avoid this, I felt shocked, the color had drained from my face, I began pacing, not knowing whether to chase him, or to stay put, would I have to work alone now, so many things spun around in my head. I hated him, and I hated myself, I tried to sleep but I couldn’t find rest, wondering where Shay was, he did not return, so I felt at a loss, sitting here staring at the wall.

I couldn’t stay here I decided, but if I was to work alone, I would have to adjust my tactics, avoid being seen, I missed Shay already, I hoped he would return all afternoon, I hung around but he was nowhere to be seen, I was truly alone.

I felt aimless as I wondered, pulling Haytham’s hat over my eyes to mask my face. I had to purchase a cloak to cover my face, as although the majority of Templar’s had never met me, some
in the order had seen my face, so I had to remain alert. I roamed the streets listening to each, and
every conversation that passed by, finding only one that caught my attention, not exactly the job I
was hoping for, but it was a lead “Yeah some Irish man got himself arrested for drunk and
disorderly, I hear he put up quite a fight” the man laughed.

I was hoping it couldn’t be Shay, he wouldn’t be so careless, but the more I heard the more I was
convinced.

I walked over to the prison, looking at its tall walls, this would be difficult to get into. So I had to
feign an accent, which thankfully was believable spouting some rubbish about how my brother
had a problem, and I just wished to see he was ok, it took some convincing, the poor guard looked
both empathic and worried about helping me, he kept glancing over his shoulder. He called me forth,
his face red, he told me to wait while they brought him up, if he could stand, I was still
hoping for anyone but Shay, but that would be a different problem.

I waited for what felt like an age before they brought him in, they had closed the door before he
realized it was me “Oh look it’s the little heart breaker herself” he stammered.

“Shay, what are you doing?, this isn’t you”

“You obviously don’t know me very well, this is me, I will sleep it off and I will be fine” he
dismissed me.

“Should I wait for you?”

“Don’t bother, I don’t want to waste another moment on you” he scowled unable to manage to
look me in the eye.

I called the guard back, he was in no state to be held fully accountable for his words, so I waited,
trying to think over what I was going to say, I played out all the possibilities in my head, preparing
myself, while he was sleeping off his hangover, I was steeling my nerves for another argument. I
could not lose another a friend, I was not ready to be here alone.

The moment he was released, I was waiting for him, exhausted, looking worse than he did, two
sleepless nights wore upon me, Shay was holding to his head groaning, when he saw me he
winced “Why are you still here?”

“I told you I wouldn’t leave your side Shay”

“I won’t hold you to that, not now, if you wish to leave then do so” he declared so matter of fact.

“I do not wish to leave” I countered.

“Even after all I have said?” he questioned.

“Yes, even after all that, sadly your words held some truth, no matter how little it maybe, he
visited me you know, that night before we argued, he told me he wasn’t giving up, so I admit that
he confused me, I know there is no hope, but I wanted to hold on to him just a bit longer, I am
sorry that it lead to hurting you, and if you wish to work alone, I will understand”

He took a deep breathe, exhaling loudly, he looked at me “No I think I can manage being your
friend Alicia, I may not like it at first, but don’t you be getting jealous when you see me courting
other lasses unless you want me for yourself” he teased.

The tension was still uncomfortable, but with each joke, I felt more at ease, he hugged me, and
thanked me for waiting, and my first thought was a strange thought to have, I thought how good
he smelt, and how solid his shoulders were. Now he had told me he loved me, I couldn’t be
unheard, things would never be as they were, I had noticed Shay before, but now I felt like I was
seeing him differently, his charm now lead me to feeling embarrassed, often my cheeks flushed
red as he teased, and joked with me.

I wanted for Haytham to rush over, and tell me he knew of a way we could be together, anything
else just seemed more complicated, I watched Shay open doors, and be more than Charming with
other girls, it had never bothered me, why now was I annoyed by their presence, I wanted them to
go on their way, and leave me and Shay be.

I hated this, why did he have to say it, before then I could delude myself into thinking he was just
a good friend, and now all illusions shattered, I hung back as he flirted with some dim-witted girl,
she was lavishing in his attention, and returning his affection, the one thing I guessed I had never
done.

“Alicia you going to burn holes in her head staring at her like that, you scared her off” he startled
me appearing at my side.

“What did I say to you?, hmm, drop the jealously unless you want me to yourself, do you want me
to yourself?”

“I found I was unable to answer the question, I just looked away “Well that’s certainly progress
then, or am I a fool to hope?”

“You never a fool Shay”

He had slowly been edging me backward, now back against the wall of the tavern, he pulled
close, I felt nervous, I had spent nothing but time with Shay, and yet I had never felt nervous until
that moment, it was overwhelming. “So if I kiss you now are you going to slap me for my
It felt so final having to make a choice right there, and then, I gasped as he leant forward, I halted his progress, I felt terrible, but closing the door on Haytham felt frightening, he pulled away, and we returned to the bar, and soon a lovely young woman was smiling at him, it was killing me, but I had to let him go, or at least that’s what I told myself.

"I am the fool" I whispered.

I didn't see Shay until the following morning, I again found yet another sleepless night despite my extreme exhaustion, I cleaned myself up, not that it helped, I was beginning to look haggard. And annoyingly he was so chipper, how did he get past things with such ease, the things keeping me awake, had been forgotten by him.

"Mornin" "Meah" I grumbled.

"Was that even a word?"

"Why are you so chipper?"

"It's a beautiful day out"

"Shut up before I am forced to kill you" I grumbled, only half joking. I felt so tired, I did not wish to suffer such enthusiasm, I dropped my head upon the table, I must of finally dozed off, as I jolted up bleary eyed looking around.

Shay was looking rather amused but concerned "are you not sleeping?"

"Not really" "Jesus, come on, you’re useless like this"

He led me up to the room he had used, I resisted at first not wishing to sleep in the bed he had used with whoever she was "you’re too tired to fight me on this one"

He was right, despite my reservations under Shays watchful eye I drifted off, it was not a restful sleep but I woke feeling a little bit more human. "This really is difficult for you to hmm" Shay mused. "I turned her down because of you"

"Who?"

"That lovely lass, you mumbled something about not wanting to sleep in our mess" he laughed, his smile was sad.

Again I didn't have the words, I was glad he hadn't but also guilted by it, he deserved to move on, not stuck at my side waiting for me. I had to think of something else "so what are we doing today?"

"Well the assassins are trying to reform, and those peace talks of yours need to begin again"

I had hoped they were home for good, as brokering peace felt like talking to spoiled children who were putting their fingers in their ears singing I can hear you, this would be a frustrating day.
As I met in a what used to be a church, in disrepair but safe to enter, I knew all I would hear was dissenting voices, as frustrating as this was, peace between the two factions had to be brokered, as any good each side accomplished was undone by the other, both equally guilty.

All I heard were insults like Templar scum, pawn, naive child from older members, I held my tongue and remained level headed, I would see his vision become a reality, but it was a nightmare, when I pointed out mistakes they would only grow defensive, they wouldn't hear me out. Shay just observed me trying and failing, for days there was no progress, a new assassin looked as if he was listening, but I couldn't be sure, I turned to him, and asked "so what do you think?"

"Who me?"
"Yes you, what's your name?"
"Xavier, I am new"
"That doesn't invalidate your opinion Xavier"
"You do make a lot of sense, and I think a few conditions could do with changing to assure the power hungry never manage to be either assassin or Templar"
"How can we guarantee such a thing?"
"Balances and checks system, we keep an eye on each other, and our own, as we all want the world to be a better place, we just do things differently"
"True, we need to assure order without oppression, and you need to assure freedom without chaos, are we being naive hoping to achieve such things?"
"I hope not or being here is a waste of my time, and yours"

With someone finally on side this became easier, weeks of useful discussions began to take place. I was tidying away my scrawled notes, when my new found ally approached "you’re not what I expected when they said Templar"

"What did you expect?"
"I don't know, a pompous older man"
Shay interjected "oh that description it’s your mentor to a tee" he laughed to himself.

I fixed him with a look, but I ended up smiling.
"So who was your mentor?"
"Haytham" I wasn't sure whether to tell the truth but I saw no harm in it, as it was my identity that needed to remain secret.

"Ah your friend’s right then, but he seems reasonable as Templars go"
"She will talk about him all day if you get her going" Shay shouted over.

I raised my eyes "ignore my little helper there he hates that I admire a man beyond him"
"Little helper?" Shay echoed, looking annoyed by the term.

"Yes, the title fits?"
"I hate to agree but she is obviously the one in charge here"
"Just when I was starting to like you“ he scowled at the assassin.

"I shall return tomorrow, and talk to you Alice"

I nodded, raising my eyes in Shay's direction. He smiled then left, as he exited Shay followed him, and I hung back, to take in the fact that finally things seemed to be moving forward, just when I never thought they would, I heard raised voices, I charged toward the door thinking the worst, I took a defensive stance, only to see Shay blocking Haytham getting passed him, Haytham now sounding angry "Let me pass" he threatened.

"What is going on here?"
"Nothing, Alicia go back inside" Shay pleaded.
But I approached much to his dismay "What do you want Haytham?" I sighed. I was more than happy to see him, but I was desperate to hide it behind a cool, and calm facade.

"I wanted to know how the peace talks are going?" his eyes alight with hope.

"They are going better than expected, there are few reasonable assassins, and they are winning round the others now, so this may actually work, we can be hopeful for now"

"That’s excellent news, and how are you?"

"Fine" I stated plainly.

"Ah, am I an unwelcome guest?" he questioned, his eyes locked upon mine.

Shay answered for me "Whatever gave you that idea, now please leave"

"Shay don’t be so disrespectful, he is our leader after all"

He curtissed "Not what I meant and you know it" I was trying to wipe the grin off my face.

Haytham looked dejected; my cool exterior began to falter "Shay, can I speak with Haytham alone"

"Ah no, you were doing so well, don’t do this"

"Trust me"

He grumbled, and left the hallway, Haytham turned back to me "Why is Shay holding me back from you?"

"He is protecting me is all"

"From me?"

"Yes from you"

"But why?"

"Because he knows how much I love you, and you coming back every few weeks to tug at my heart strings hurts, you know how much I want to be with you, but like I said last time, and I mean it, this has to stop, you know there is no way I can come back, they think me dead, and you have purpose, and direction with them and I would never take that from you, but if I can’t have you please stop coming to see me"

"If you wish me to leave, I shall"

"No I don’t wish it, I want anything but this, I need you to, and I can’t pull away from you, you have to pull away from me, please!"

"Is this goodbye?" he said so sorrowfully that I felt tears prick my eyes.

"I don’t want it to be, and I will do all I can for you"

"Then stay with me Alicia, I can’t bear the thought of losing you"

"Don't say that, it’s unfair, if it was possible I would already be at your side, damn it, please go" I cried.

Tears tracked my face, as he looked at me, then he left swiftly slamming the door. "Shay!" I cried.

"What is it?, are you ok?"

"No, I need you to stop me, I will go after him otherwise"

He pulled me into his arms, holding me in a firm embrace until Haytham was long gone. "I knew you could do it, it won’t be easy, but you will manage it"

I didn’t have his faith, I was feeling an awful sense of regret, from not kissing Haytham, for not running into his arms, I knew why I couldn’t but I still wanted to, I needed to do something "Shay I need to keep my mind occupied"

So we discussed the topics of tomorrow’s talks, running through each point until I was sick of hearing it, ans Shay sick of repeating himself. “Better?”

“A little”

"I know, come have a drink with me”

“Is that wise?”

“What does that mean?”

“i don’t think I am in the best state of mind to go drinking”

“I can’t drink alone”

“I can’t imagine you will be alone long Shay, gorgeous Irishman like you, the women will be
fighting over you”

“Gorgeous? Aye”

“Poor choice of words, don’t hold it against me”

“Your right, I would rather hold you against me”

“Do those lines ever work?”

“I don’t know, maybe I should come over there and find out”

My cheeks ran red, his flirting had been getting more and more close to the line, I was still unsure I was ready to cross “Hold right there, go test that charm elsewhere”

“You’re missing out Alicia”

“I know”

With that he walked away, I sat down on one of the benches, staring into space when I felt something on the back of my neck, I jolted forward, I rolled forward, turning to see Xavier sitting behind me “Shit I forget you assassins are so sneaky”

“Hey, thought you were all about peace” he smiled widely.

“Why are you still here?”

“You’re not a Templar”

“What do you mean?”

“You don’t exist in their order”

“So this is either a trap of some kind, or you’re the only female name I could find, and she’s meant to be dead, you look good for a dead woman”

His words made me wish I had followed Shay, I had expected this to happen, as no assassin would believe a Templar calling for peace, his accusing stare was burning into me.
Do you want to live?

Chapter Summary

Alicia is given cold hard truths that she needs to really consider

“So what do you intend to do with this information?”

His response was not what I expected “Well I would be curious to know why you continue to aid an organisation that has labelled you a traitor, and turned its back upon you?”

“I believe in them, just as you believe in your creed”

“Yes I understand that, but what kind of life is this?, you have to avoid detection, work tirelessly with no credit for all you do, I know Shay is a good man, and he cares for you, but he can never give you what you need”

“And what’s that?”

“Your life back, with us you could come out of the shadows, and the conviction for which you stand will be rewarded, you can live again, now that is something I think you should consider, a friend of mine Luca will be joining us tomorrow, I think it would do you good to hear what he has to say, and you need not worry, I have no intention of handing you over to the Templar’s”

I narrowed my eyes “Trust must not be an easy thing to give when you have made so many sacrifices, but I will honor my word, you can believe me or not, your choice”

As he disappeared, I relaxed, dropping my blade to the ground, my hand had ached from holding on to the hilt so tightly, I had thought my life would end right there and then, but thankfully there were good assassins, and worst of all he had a point, and it hit home, what he was offering me was hope, something that I had felt so little of lately, just the faint glimmer of it had me reeling, and questioning all I held dear, I would not betray Haytham, nor Shay, but he was right, what life did Shay have for staying with me, he did not have one, he lived in the shadows with me, he could not put down roots, or start a family, at least not with me, and he deserved all of these things, if he wanted them.

So I wasn’t just ruining my life, but Shay’s as well, and I hated myself for it, I looked at the seat in which Xavier had sat, his words echoed, bringing tears to my eyes, I recalled Cole’s role in all of this, my manufactured friend who had used me, and the moment I defied him he ruined the life I had begun to cultivate for myself, so what were my options, continue being on the run until they caught up with me, or hear out Xavier, and Luca, maybe they did have something worth hearing.

I was tired, so I retired to the cot in the cold corner of the abandoned church, thinking is this the life I wanted for myself, and how long could I live this way, I drifted off despite shivering in the cold, when I woke up in the morning, feeling ill, my nose was stuffy, and I felt feverish, thinking it was just a common cold, I will be fine.

“Are you a doctor?”

“No, but…”

“Well then I will take you to one, then I will preside over today's negotiations”

I was about to protest but I didn’t have the energy, Shay gave me a cloak, and led me toward the closest thing to a doctor, I looked at his office, eyeing everything with distaste, this was not real medicine, this was old age nonsense, no science, just herbs, and natural remedies, it was moments like these that I recalled what era I was in and how limited so many things were back then, made me long for modern medicine, and a doctor who could actually cure me.

He seemed like a nice enough fellow, mixing herbal concoctions in what seemed like a random manner, rather than by design, it did not fill me with confidence, and the smell of the herbal concoction, made me wretch, as its potency brought tears to my eyes, he looked hopefully to me, waiting for me to drink it, this was not medicine, this was bad herbal tea, but knowing I has so few options, I grabbed the mug, and tried to drink it faster than it could touch my tongue, but sadly I got the whole variance of the taste, so bitter, that it felt like it burned my throat on the way down. Now I was ill and nauseous, this was not an improvement, I spent the entire afternoon throwing
up, and on an empty stomach it just hurt.

Strangely enough as the nausea passed, I began to feel better, I still had a fever but I was no longer sweating profusely, and my head was lighter, and less hazy, maybe that herbal tea had actually done some good, and Shay did not do a bad job, I felt guilty for worrying about letting him take over, I thought he was going to be hot-headed, but he was very calm, and measured in his responses.

As the day finally concluded, Xavier walked over with his friend Luca, he had a pretty face, the scars leant him an air of a hard life, that had not just been lived upon his looks, he had worked hard, and fought to gain his place, I was curious to what he would have to say to me that would be so convincing, so I followed them, in the back of my mind wondering if it was a trap, we sat in the hallway, Luca smiled, as he began to speak his voice was silvery in tone, with an endearing twang, I had to focus to hear his words rather than listen to how he said them.

“I have long lived the life that you do now, and it will wear you down, I mean look at the accommodations you have to live in, your ill due to having to sleep in a cold church, it may be nothing this time, but do you always wish to look over your shoulder, hide away, and drag your friend into this world, I understand none of this is an easy thing, but the assassins can give you your life back”

“But you’re asking me to betray those I trust, and love for something quite selfish”

“Is is selfish to want to exist within this world, lead an actual life?, if that’s selfish then I am a very selfish man”

“Ok Luca, I think we should let her think on it” Xavier cut in.

“Okay, I know I have been talking at you, but I know what it is to truly feel like you’re not a part of this world, and it is no life for you, or your friend in there” he pointed to where he assumed Shay would be.

The element of truth gave me pause, they soon left me, leaving me to my thoughts, just when I was so sure of one thing, I was being challenged, could I not have a moment to hold on to one thing, why was everything threatening to slip through my fingers, maybe it’s because I didn’t belong in this time, maybe I was meant to be invisible, but he was right, Shay should get to live, I had no right to be here but he did.
I returned to the hall feeling lost in my confusion, so much had changed for me, I often found it hard to keep up, and I knew it should have been more present in my mind, but what had I done to the future by remaining here.

I was beginning to feel like guilt was an everyday feeling, for what I had done, or what I may be doing, I had no right to ruin the lives of innocents, but how was I to pull myself free, I no longer wanted to return to my own time, I was happier here.

I looked around the room seeing Shay sitting down on one of the benches at the back, I walked over, taking a seat by him. "Shay?" I called for his attention.

"Yes Alicia" he said absentmindedly.

"Shay!" I repeated with more authority, he had to know this was serious.

"Sorry love, what is it?" He asked gently, placing his hand upon my knee, feeling mildly distracted by his proximity, and his hand slowly creeping up my leg, I think he wanted to see how far I would let him get, I halted his progress not because I wanted to, but I needed to, I pushed aside the urges that surfaced as his fingers traced my leg, taking a deep breath I steeled myself to ask a serious question, unsure if I wanted the answer, or believed he would tell me the truth.

"Have I ruined your life?"

"What!" Shay spluttered.

"I mean this isn't much of a life really, and I have dragged you into this, you have to exist only in the shadows because of me, surly you want more, a real life, a family, recognition for the work you do"

"Who has been filling your head with nonsense?" He retorted.

"It's not nonsense Shay, you deserve better"

"Don't you?" He countered.

"I don't have a choice, I am on the run, you are not a traitor or a wanted man"

"Oh but I am, just not with the Templar's, am surprised these assassins didn't kill me where I stood, still no idea what stayed their hand, you're the reason I would guess, are they trying to win you over to them?"

"Not exactly, but what they say is true, I am ruining your life, and I have no life of my own, and with them I could, but I don't want to betray you or Haytham"

"If you chose that life I know you would not blindly follow orders, you would question them, and to have an ally within the assassins would certainly make these peace talks viable, but is it really what you want?"

"Shay I don't know anymore, so much has happened, and my confusion is clouding my judgement, I don't even know if I trust my own judgement anymore"

"Is there anyone you do trust?"

"You"

"Well then listen to me, whatever you decide I will be by your side whatever form it takes, I will never return to the assassins, but you have my aid when you need it"

"Shay, I don't deserve you"

"Will you stop saying that"

"It's true, your too good to me, and look what you have had to sacrifice for me, I am not worth it"

"Stop it now, I made the choice, and I knew what I was getting myself into"

"Would you not rather a different life?"

"Yes of course, but that is not an option"

"What life would you rather?"

"You sure you want to hear this?" He sounded hesitant.

"Yes I want to hear it" I encouraged.
"Fine you asked, I was hoping to remain a Templar, but we would leave here go far away to safer place, we would do all we could for the order, while we would get married in secret, and hopefully have kids someday."

I was taken back by how much thought he had put into that, he had really thought of the details. "Not the answer you were expecting aye?"

"No not at all, you have given that a lot of thought"

"So this life I speak of, would you be interested in that?"

I looked up at his expectant face, a life as a Templar, wife, and mother, was that the type of life I wanted for my child, if I wanted children at all, I had not given it much thought, but Shay was a good man, and I would not be lucky enough to find another like him.

"I don't mean to sound harsh, but may I think upon it?" I hoped he wouldn't be offended.

"Yes it's fine, it's a lot to take in, but you are not staying here, I don't want you getting sick, so you can come to the tavern with me, and have drink if you're up to it?"

"Yes I need a drink" 

"Not because of what I said I hope" 

"No, just think it would calm my nerves, as they are on edge after all of these questions spinning in my head"

We walked toward the tavern, as we entered the bar, the raucous atmosphere was obvious, getting a room was strange, as the woman behind the bar eyed Shay, smiled widely "shay this your newest girl"

"Newest?" I questioned a shame faced Shay.

"Erm well I couldn't be sure of you, and I am still not"

"Shay I was kidding you are entitled to a life"

"Don't say it again, I want a life with you, and when you make up your god damn mind come and find me" he snapped, storming out of the room.

Shocked by his sudden anger, I decided to take a long bath, enjoying the warmth of the water, my aching muscles relaxed, my injured leg throbbed but was healing nicely, there were clothes on the bed, when I managed to step out of the bath, tl, when I managed to step out of the bath, tl, they were feminine and flowing, what was Shay hoping for tonight I wondered, as I pulled the skirt up, and the top over my head, pulling my boots on, letting my hair dry in its own left it wavy.

I walked down the stairs, the skirt swaying with me, I struggled to spot Shay in the crowd, when I did I saw he was talking to some young blonde girl, I felt my heckles rising, I rushed over, tapping him upon the shoulder, he turned and declared "Jesus, you look good" his eyes wide, his tongue lolling out of his mouth.

My cheeks flushed, the blonde girl continued to vie for his attention, she pulled at his arm, glared at me but she eventually got frustrated and stormed away, purposely knocking into me, but it was like me and Shay were the only people in the room, we returned to reality breaking the trance.

We began drinking and joking, the intense moment had passed, I noticed in my periphery some trouble brewing, hearing the words "you fucking eavesdropping"

I tensed, hearing a voice I recognized "not at all, just here to drink"

"You lying bastard, I saw you hanging around earlier"

"You are mistaken"

"I am going to teach you to stick your nose in other people's business"

I pulled up, Shay followed close behind, Haytham took a hit square to the jaw, as two of them held him in place, I hit the man over the head with a bottle, as he collapsed, Shay took one, Haytham the other, I kept an eye out for reinforcements for the fallen soldiers, they rushed in 5 of them, looking for their comrade "boys we have company" I shouted.

One rushed me, smacking me into the bar, my back twisted in pain, the impact shocking my body, but I reacted quickly and head butted him, his nose seemed to explode with the impact, blood splattered everywhere, my head throbbed. He staggered forward at me, missing with his next hit, I tossed him over the bar, using his momentum against him.

Shay was helping Haytham with the last two, once we had managed to deal with them, we had drawn so much attention, we were forced to leave. As we hobbled outside, all of us holding to our respective injuries. Shays cheek was red, Haythams lip was split, I don't know why I began laughing, but once started I couldn't stop "so much for calming my nerves"

Shay smiled, and then winced recalling his injury, Haytham stood there quietly "I should go" he stressed.

I walked over to him, his expression difficult to read, but I kissed his cheek and whispered "it was
nice to see you"

"Thank you both for the help, I seem to have lost you your accommodation, please feel free to use this hideout we have, only I know of it so it should be safe, either way be careful"

He embraced me, whispering "Alicia I miss you" pulling away hastily.

He was gone, spiriting in and out of my life, I blinked away the tears "so do you know where he meant?"

"Yes not too far"

I followed Shay round corners, down streets until we found a small home, cosy, but it had enough home comforts to be one of the nicest places I had stayed in days. My back throbbed, I protested the pain aloud, Shay heard me he came up behind me telling me to lean toward, placing my hands upon a cabinet.

It was agonizing to remain in this position, I almost jumped out of my skin when I felt Shays hands slide under my top at the small of my back "relax would you, this will help"

I couldn't relax but I allowed him to continue, his fingers pressed, and massaged the skin, at first it caused more pain, I hissed as the dull ache burned, soon his touch became soothing, feeling so much better, when he stopped I felt disappointed.

I turned to him realizing may face was caked into blood I washed it before sitting him down upon the bed hoping to aid him, "it's nothing really" he protested, I cleaned the scratches upon his cheek, straddling him, he looked frightened for a moment "what are you doing?" He questioned.

I kissed his cheek softly, he winced a little, the second time he was more relaxed "anywhere else hurt?" I asked.

"Yes" he pointed to his lip.

I pressed my lips to his softly, he didn't respond at first, as if he expected me to pull away, but continued to enjoy the wetness of his lips to mine, when he began to kiss me back, the kiss became a slow, deep kiss, both of us enjoying the taste, and feel of each other's lips, he groaned, he broke the kiss "are you... I kissed him mid-sentence; he broke away again breathless "are you sure?" I pulled my shirt over my head, and began to unbutton his coat, pulling him free of it, and his vest, then finally his shirt "Alicia stop" he gripped the back of my neck, holding me in place "is this what you want?"
"Yes, it is" I said with certainty, and growing desire.

He didn't say another word, dragging me back into a passionate kiss, I pulled up to my knees, he stopped me from getting up, gripping my waist, and despite me wincing, I managed to hold in place, and when I felt his warm breath upon my left nipple, circling the nipple with tongue, I groaned as shivers coursed through my body, awaking it to the pleasure of his touch. He sucked tenderly evoking groans of enjoyment, arching my back hurt, but the pleasure outweighed the pain, he sucked vigorously causing me to cry out, I could feel my wetness pooling in my panties, he took his time, it was a delightful torture, as he took to my right breast, with the same fervent energy.

He released my nipple, gripping my waist, flipping me on to my back, I held back a yelp of pain, relaxing into the sheets, as he pulled my skirt over my hips, before returning to pull down my panties, he pulled back between my legs, taking his fingers to my slick entrance "fuck" he exclaimed as my juices coated his fingers, he pushed them in slowly, enjoying the fact that I was dripping wet for him, he pulled his fingers out, pulling them to his lips, he sucked at them greedily, indulging his urges to the full.

He pulled up level, face to face, he stared into my eyes, brushing my hair away from my face, kissing my lips softly before he pushed his ready cock inside me, growling as I took him in with ease, the friction delighted him, as he pulled out, then slamming back inside me with a pleasurable measure of force, the slow but forceful rhythm he built up thrilled me, each thrust forward pushed me closer to a delightful edge, I relished the powerful orgasm that took my body, making me shiver with ecstasy, and cry his name, I loved the sound of his name cried out in pleasure from my lips, so as each additional wave took me I moaned his name softly, I felt him hardening within me, his body was as stiff as his cock when he cried out his release, he relaxed as his cock pulsed, the sensation thrilled me, he collapsed on top of me, catching his breath.

He pulled himself out, then dropped down upon the bed, he pulled me to him, still breathless he muttered "fuck that was worth the wait"

I giggled to myself, I was more than satisfied, but I felt a bit of sadness closing the door on Haytham, and losing Shay as a friend, as now we were more, or at least I hoped we would be
Complications

Chapter Summary

Shay, and Alicia try to have a life together but an old face puts Alicia back to square one.

I woke up the next morning to see Shay smiling at me, I smiled back, opening my eyes sleepily “Good morning”

“Must you be so chipper”

“Yes, I got lucky last night” he laughed.

“People still say that?” I mused.

“Well I could be all romantic about it but I didn’t want to put you off your breakfast” he teased.

“Food?, yes there was some in the kitchen, brought it up for you”

“You shouldn’t have” I smiled, forgetting how ravenous I was until that moment, I set upon the fruit, and bread, and strange looking soup like a starving predator, it was cold but I didn’t care, but it did cast my mind to modern conveniences I could have really done with in that moment, after I devoured the food Shay turned to me “Bloody hell you were hungry weren’t you” he smiled.

“Now if we are to leave America, where should we go?”

“Can we not just flee to the other side of America?, my language skills prevent anywhere else being an option”

“I could teach you Spanish, or Italian if you like?”

“Well you are a man of many talents”

“As you discovered last night” he smiled wickedly.

My cheeks ran red, he almost pounced upon me, kissing me like he had never done so before, long and loving “Shall we not leave this bed for the rest of the day” he growled.

“I like the sound of that” I smiled.

He needed no more encouragement, and what a day it was, we made love, fucked, and tasted each other until we collapsed next to each other “Jesus Christ that is how you spend a day, you given any more thought to where we should go?”

“Not really, I have been busy you know, after multiple orgasms I don’t think the brain works anymore” I laughed.

“You do make the most delicious noises when you cum” he growled, this conversation was arousing in itself.

“We are not leaving this room today are we?” I said in a breathless voice.

“No, I am not done pleasing you yet”

“Shay your incorrigible”

He kissed me softly, and began to disappear beneath the sheets “Woah wait a minute, where do you think you’re going?” I called out.

“What you weren’t complaining last night?” he countered.

“I am not complaining now, but it’s only fair that it’s your turn don’t you think”

He dropped beside me, I slid my fingers down his chest, pulling down slowly until my eyes met his twitching cock, I took him in hand first, gently tracing his shaft until he groaned softly, his cock growing with each touch, I held to his cock, tickling the head with my tongue, he gasped, pulling the sheet away so he could see me. I took his length into my wet, and warm mouth, coating his cock with my saliva, sucking tentatively at the head, his back arched, as his grip upon the sheet became tighter.

I used both my hand and mouth to tease him closer to his release, he cried out as my grip became firm, and my suction became more harsh, lapping my tongue around the head, he lifted his hips again, stifling a cry, I stopped suddenly.

“Don’t stop” he breathed.

“Don’t hold back, I want to feel, taste and hear you cum”

“Yes anything just keep going” he begged.

I continued much to his relief, and this time as he drew closer, he groaned vocally, his warm cum
coating my tongue, I tasted him as I swallowed, he was salty, I liked it, licking my lips after I
released his pulsing cock, I pulled up into his arms “Fuck, that was good”
And we continued until the dark of night returned, we then finally but begrudgingly left the bed,
bathing separately as we knew if we did anything together it would lead to us never leaving this
place, it was tempting but sadly it would not remain safe forever. Fully clothed, I felt quite
disappointed, it must have shown upon my face, as Shay asked “Are you ok love?”
“Yeah, just a bit sad to see you in clothes” I sighed.
He laughed “Don’t worry, I won’t be able to keep my hands off you for long” he drawled.

As we snuck out in the darkness, we shared knowing looks, life would certainly be different now,
while Shay was finding crew for the Morrigan, I was looking at all the letters I had written to
Haytham, and wondered if they would be safe to post, or a good idea to do so, I sighed heavily, as
I placed them back in my pocket knowing they would not be a good idea not yet at least.

I walked to the dock, pulling my hood down, but holding to the hat Haytham had given me, I
wondered if I should throw this to the sea, but I found myself unable, I knew Xavier, and Luca
would know my answer, but I had left them a letter never the less, I had gotten used to writing in
ink, at first my writing my unintelligible but now it flowed like I had used an ink well my entire
life, I hoped they would understand, that’s the thing with decision you can only do what you can
with the information you have, whether this was the right decision remained to be seen.

We set sail, ending up in Charleston, so not too far but far enough, on the boarder of the French,
and Spanish influence, we managed to aid our Templar brothers in silence until I started getting
sick, Shay was worried, but when a doctor told us I was pregnant, he was ecstatic, I was less
enthused, and more frightened by the prospect of bringing a child up in this place, given the
instability of the region, and not having the first idea of how to be a mother, I told Shay all of these
things, and somehow he managed to allay my fears.

9 months seemed like the longest time, and now it felt like it had flow over, no one could have
prepared me for the pain, I wished I was in the future the entire time, pushing through the pain
literally, I thought maybe it was the exhaustion but I swear I heard the doctor apologise to Shay,
he passed me our baby girl, and she was so tiny, I wanted to protect her from everything, it took a
while for me to be able to hand her over to Shay, reluctantly I agreed I needed to rest, Alice we
called her.

I drifted into deep slumber, the pain still lingering as I woke up, I thought I was having a
nightmare but I was not so lucky, Cole was sitting at my bedside, holding my daughter, fear
captured my breath in my throat “Please don’t hurt her, give her to me” I begged.

“I am not here to hurt her, I need her, and Shay for insurance”
“What does that mean?” I cried as my panic grew.

And then I felt a strange sensation cut through me, when I woke up I was not in our little home in
Charleston, I was surrounded by unfamiliar faces, Alice, and Shay were gone, I began to weep
“All is alright?” I heard a strange disembodied voice called out.

As I regained full consciousness I saw an overly made up woman, she was not speaking English
yet I understood her, strange I thought, what had happened, then I recalled Cole, he had done
this to me, taken me away from my two loves, my heart ached, and my mind wished to know
what was going on.

“Where am I?”

“You’re in the house of madam Augusta, I see you have just been with child, when we found
you, you were babbling about someone stealing your child, I am sorry for your predicament, you
may stay for two days to recover, by then you can either earn your way, or leave, I am not in
business of taking in strays, you’re a beautiful girl, I could make allot with you, let me know your
decision”
I spent the majority of those two days sleeping, and crying, calling for explanations but no
response from Cole only made me feel more confused, when I finally pulled myself out of the
room, I went to the owner, who took my silence as a yes, she had me cleaned up, and dressed, she
seemed pleased with her handy work, I was confused, and I felt like I was being thrown from one
thing to another, I wanted to be with Shay, and my daughter, not where ever this was, or
whenever this was.

Then my communicator sprung to life, the static forced me to hold to my head in pain, I had to
retire to the back room, as the madam said I was scaring the customers.

“Now you’re going to aid the Templar’s in the way we see fit, I have sent you back further so you
can improve upon our position here, not too far back, but now you have to be so careful, you can’t
be careless least your family disappear either through your mistake, or you force my hand, do
everything I say to the letter, and you will be reunited with your family, if not I will kill them”

“You son of a bitch”

“Watch your mouth, you will be respectful”
My panic, and rage I barely contained stammering “what do you want?”

“I need you to get aboard a ship called the jackdaw, and stop a captain aiding the assassins”
“How will I manage that?” I cried.

“How resourceful, you’ll figure it out” then the communicator fell silent, I would have remained in the dark with my panicked thoughts, but I heard a scream, so like a fool I charged out, and I saw a rather large group of men, I looked to the madam, who was backing toward me “We don’t serve pirates here”

A man stepped forward “Surely you wouldn’t deny my men the joy of your ladies company, I will pay up front if that is your worry”

“No I can’t risk my girls” she stammered as he pulled closer.

His sand blonde hair, and unshaven face, was tanned from the sun, but still pale, his eyes were gentler than his nature, I was eyeing him to try and take measure of him, he seemed reasonable enough I thought, or hoped.

“Look if my madam says she doesn’t serve pirates you will have to respect her”

“You seriously want to disappoint my crew” there was a hint of a threat in his words.

“All my girls are busy with clients”

“What about the mouthy one?” he pointed at me.

“You don’t want her, she is new” she attempted to save me from them.

“Hmm your right can’t have my poor men stuck with an inexperience lass, I will take her and teach her a thing or two”

My eyes widened, I looked to the madam who was no help, she was more frightened than I was “Take a seat boys, the moment a girl is available you see to it my crew are seen to aye” he said to the quivering madam.

“As for you” he turned to me “you’re coming with me” he proceeded to drag me up the stairs, throwing me into an empty room.

He began to approach me, I backed away “This is only my first day, could you not be gentle with me” I said hoping to appeal to his gentle nature.

“But I don’t even know your name?” I joked.

“Edward Kenway, now to the bed” he beckoned me to him.

That name was familiar, when it hit me, if I had gone further back, this could be Haytham’s father, I almost gagged at the thought, I had to find a way out of this situation, but I had no idea how.
I looked at Edward, trying to be alluring. An idea sparked into my mind, I pulled the ribbon from my hair, sending my hair flowing over my shoulders. I began pulling at the string upon the bodice of the dress, revealing the swell of my full cleavage.

"Now, we're talking" Edward stated rubbing his hands together.

As I drew closer, he gripped my hips, pulling closer. He leant in to kiss me, I placed my hand in the path of his oncoming lips.

"Hold on, how many women of my profession deal in kisses?, if you want them, you will have to go elsewhere" I cautioned him.

He grabbed my hand, pulling it away, forcing a kiss upon me. At first I was resistant, but as his lips continue to taste mine, I began to relax. His passion grew; I let his tongue slid into my mouth. I groaned before I realised what I was doing, I broke the kiss, registering his fingers trailing up my thighs, he pressed me down under his weight.

It was like I shocked back to reality, this was Haytham's father, and I couldn't deny he was an amazing kisser, and more than charming. But I loved Shay, I couldn't do this.

I had to do something, but I could feel his wondering hands, teasing my thighs, his stare was intense. I distracted him, stopping his fingers just inches from my sex, I trembled.

I purred "Are you not sick of being the one in charge captain Kenway?"

"Not with you, your different from the girls I am used to in these whore houses, and hearing you call me captain" he moaned.

I felt offended by the term, but aroused by his groan, so deep, and guttural.

"Compliments have no place in here" I stated.

I tried to not enjoy his touch. He took his lips to my neck; my sex was throbbing, as he trailed kisses down to my shoulder. I stifled a moan, and I bit my lip to hide my enjoyment.

"I would rather you cry aloud" he said in a breathy tone.

He continued down, I had to get bolder in my new role to stop him, I tried to push him on to his back, he resisted.

I tried again; he was forced by momentum on to his back. I straddled him, leaning over him, tying his hands together, and attaching him to the bed.

"Now that’s a delicious view" he growled.

As I pulled away, and up, he shouted "What are you doing?!"

"Your very tempting Mr kenway, but I am no whore"

"You can't leave me here" he tried reasoning.

"I am sorry but I can't give you what you paid for, I will get the madam to give your money back"

"Not what I want, come back here" he ordered. His composure fading.

As I drew closer to the door, he cursed my name; I began to descend the stairs slowly, as not to draw attention. Edward escaped more easily than I imagined, he tore down after me, grabbing my wrist as I my feet found the ground floor. He ran me to the wall, pressing his lips to my ear.

"You’re going to regret this, my love trust me" he hissed.

His crew looking on at him "she won't forget me lads" he cried.

They cheered, I wouldn't forget him, and realised I had shot myself in the foot. The communicator sprung to life "follow him, now" Cole ordered.

I felt for the madam, who was still cowering. I walked to the doorway, watching them leave. I followed after them, the madam crying for my blood, despite my aiding her. I guess she saw her investment leaving; I soon was out of ear shot. Slowly following Edward, I was good at following people, never a skill I thought I would need, or master. I kept him in my sight, and I remained out of his.

As he drew closer to his ship, there was too much open ground; I would be seen any moment.

As if on cue, Edward turned on his heel "Was it that good that you had to follow me for more" he
jeered.

My cheeks flushed, I mumbled "I would like to join your crew."
"Excuse me" he mocked, taking his hand to his ear.

More clearly I repeated myself. He burst out laughing "You want what?"

I looked him in the eye "I am able to aid in the manning of this ship, I have been aboard many a ship."

I knew I was stretching the truth, only the morrigan, and that didn't exist in this time, a heavy pain in my heart as I remembered Shay. I had gone too far with Edward, I held back tears that threatened to find freedom, choking on the lump in my throat.

He was gasping, and crying with laughter. He looked up at me still in bulk. I held my ground, and stare.

He calmed down "Why should I help you?" He declared.
"Because I am able, and I can fight."
"Prove it" he said pointedly.

He took a fighting stance, waiting for me to do the same, as the crew circled us, I was trapped.
"Wait a minute, this is a no win situation, I win your pissed off at me, I lose, and you leave me here."

"Well then love, find a way to make it a win" he countered, looking confident he would win. I wanted to wipe that smug smile off his handsome face.

He launched forward, catching my arm, twisting it behind my back, I hissed as he wrenched my shoulder up. I stomped on his foot, and elbowed him in the face. As he staggered back, taking his hand to his nose, he observed the blood on his hand.

I worried he would be furious; I prepared for his outrage, taking a defensive stance, my shoulder burning.

Instead he declared "she is a feisty one" a smile plastered over his face.

He ran at me, charging me harshly to the ground, pinning my wrists down.
"You look so good on your back" he purred.

My back throbbed with the impact, I struggled but I couldn't gain my freedom. He released my wrists, walking away, my chances slipping away.

I didn't know what to say or do, so I remained upon the sand, looking up at the sky, wondering how I had ended up here. Rationally I knew, but this was so strange, so twisted, I missed Shay, and Alice, I longed to hold her.

"Bloody hell girl, get up would you, you can join us."

He almost sounded as though he felt sorry for me, I guess I was a sorry sight lying sprawled out on the sand.

I pulled up quickly before he thought better of it "Eager aren't you" he said as I bounded over.
"Yes, I have always wanted to be a pirate" I lied.
"What draws you to it?" He mused aloud.
"The freedom" I said plainly.
"Well you will have plenty of that love, what is your name?"
"Alicia"
"Well Alicia welcome aboard, the jackdaw."

Alisha finds out what being aboard the Jackdaw will entail

Boarding the Jackdaw it was like its own little world, with own set of rules, and unruly population. They worked well manning the ship, communication an smoothly, I wondered if there was a place for me on board. I hoped that Edward would not press me again, considering what he felt I owed him, and on some level he had a right to the assumption, given that I had been in a whore house.

I did not wish to betray my husband, nor put him in jeopardy, so I was at a loss with how to proceed. Edward called for me to follow him, motioning to the captains quarters, I felt skittish. Walking into that room was laden with all kinds of tension, it put me on edge.

“Take a seat love” he offered.

Taking behind his desk, propping his feet up making himself at home. I looked to him, and stated “I would rather stand”

I felt restless, it took all of my control to remain still. He looked at me suspiciously “That was not a request, but an order, if your part of my crew, you will take orders from me, so sit down, your making me nervous” he smiled.

I dropped into the chair before me, still unable to relax, I began to fidget. “Ok I am going to cut down to it, what do you really want?”

“Excuse me?”

“Look love, I know a lie when I hear one, so out with it or I throw you in the drink” he warned.

“I need money”

“What for?”

“I need to free my husband from captivity, and I hear you have a prize that would give me all I need”

“Yes he is being held by real scum of the earth types” I was on some level praying Cole could hear me, but relieved at the silence from the communicator.

“So you what money to pay his ransom, and I hear you have a prize that would give me all I need”

“Your husband?” he almost sounded disappointed. Ironic give I knew he was married also, but I guess there were double standards back then.

“Yes he is being held by real scum of the earth types” I was on some level praying Cole could hear me, but relieved at the silence from the communicator.

“So you what money to pay his ransom, and you expect I can aid you with that?” he posed.

“Yes, your reputation precedes you captain Kenway, fearsome, living by your own rules, and hoping to find the coin to live as all men should be allowed”

“Very accurate description” he stated with a furrowed brow.

“Will you help me captain Kenway?” I pleaded.

“I can never say no to a beautiful lass, now the matter of what you will do aboard my ship, you won’t like it, but you have to start at the bottom I am afraid, in lieu of a cabin boy, you will have to scrub decks, check supplies, and any other hideous job that any of my lads wishes to pass on to you”

I did not like the sound of it, but for Shay, and Alice I would do anything. I nodded my agreement.

“Where will I sleep?” I pondered aloud.

“How would be the safest option”

“With you?” I questioned.

“Well I won’t be in here at the same times as you, but yes at times you will be forced to share with me, given that you’re a married woman I will try my best to remain a gentleman” he smiled widely.

I was weary of his non committal nature to remaining at a distance, but I had no choice, I had to remain aboard. “see to it that you behave captain Kenway” I said in a stern but teasing fashion.

“I will try, I assure you” he grinned.

Pulling up from behind his desk, he rounded the table, stopping beside me. He helped me up “I shall speak to my crew, you had best get some rest, you will need it” he cautioned me. With that he left, I stood aboard his ship, I sighed heavily.
Looking around at my surroundings, I should have been enjoying the nuances, and differences within history, but no I was running errands for the modern day twisted version of the Templars. Haytham would be ashamed to see how far the brotherhood had fallen, I felt guilty for thinking of him, and for a passing moment missing him. I had a rather unique opportunity to get to know his father, just not in the biblical way. Edward had rough edges, but there was a gentleness to him beneath all the bluster, he was a good man, history taught me this, and now I would get to see him for myself.

I wondered over to the bed, small, I wondered how two people would manage to fit on it, it would certainly be a tight squeeze. I realized after lying down given the limited space, Edward and I would be very close, he would be forced to either crush in behind me, or something that didn’t bare thinking of, as it felt strange to consider, never mind allow the thought to process.

I lay there for a time staring at the wood, hearing it creak, the waves crashing to the hull, was lulling me to sleep. I wondered what Shay was doing, I hoped that Cole was treating me husband and daughter fairly, given I had done his bidding. If he hurt them, I would kill him, I didn’t know how I would get back, but I would find a way. The cold rushed in as the door blustered open and shut, we ran into a storm, I could hear the manic footsteps, and the deck awash with attacking waves. The wind billowed, roaring for some time, I pulled my arms around myself, as the thin sheet was no match for the elements, I shivered. I had been so close to sleep, and now I felt wide awake, and frozen.

I tried to occupy my mind but it began to run to dark places, all the worst case scenarios, of me ruining the time line, getting Shay and daughter killed, cleaning up vomit, shit, piss, and anything the sea decided to add from this ship was not a comforting thought. The storm eventually passed, and the seas grew calmer, my mind however did not follow suit, and now I was freezing. When the door swung open once more, I pulled into myself to protect my body from the attacking elements, but nothing happened. I opened my eyes to see Edward milling around, removing blades, and his jacket. He walked over, I looked up at him, he looked exhausted, and who was I to deny a man comfort after such an ordeal. I had heard the cries, as men had been taken by the sea, and manning a ship with less crew, meant extra work for all. I pulled up; he sat at the edge of the bed. His tired eyes pleading, he didn’t want to have to fight with me also, he had already fought the waves. I didn’t say a word; I took my hands to his tense shoulders, much to his relief, and surprise. I massaged his shoulders until he began to relax, he groaned in satisfaction, as I kneaded the skin, melting the stress away.

He turned to me “That was merely an act of kindness” I assured him.

He smiled, pulling in behind me, he pulled his arms around me, pulling me to him. His body heat was comforting, and managed to take the bite out of the cold that now surrounded us. “An act of kindness I assure you” he whispered into my ear. This felt strange, but I couldn’t deny that the closeness made me feel a little less alone. I began to slowly drift into a deep sleep, in which my nightmares taunted me.
Chapter Summary

Alicia takes to work upon the Jackdaw. Finding life aboard is no easy task, making her choice all the more fraught.

It was colder with out with Edwards arms around me, but I was glad to wake alone. My nightmares had tormented me, holding on for dear life. Only to have Shay's hand slip through my fingers, I had watched him, and Alice fade away so many times, I had found tears upon my face upon waking. The fear of losing my love, and daughter was fraying my already raw nerves. Having to betray a good man was not steadying my now shaking hands, this was like a no win situation, as no matter what I did someone, or many would have to pay the price, for the choice I made in that moment.

I pulled to the edge of the cot, placing my feet firmly to ground, taking my hand in mine, I felt the overwhelming responsibility weighed upon me. Worse was the unknown, I had already taken a life, how many could be destroyed, or never come to be?

The longer I considered these unanswerable questions, the more my head hurt. I rubbed my temples, hoping to ease the pressure now crushing down upon them, but there was nothing I could do, only pray I made the right choice in the end. With that I pulled up swiftly, walking out on deck, the sun blinding me, as I wondered what they would have me doing today. I was taken a back when I heard the chorus ring out, not in key but still a harmony of a sort, each man on deck singing loud, focused upon their task. It gave me an eerie sense of calm, the waves lapping the ship, and their words soothed me. They looked more content than most people I knew in the future, singing while you work. Maybe they were on to something, something we never had. The belief, and will to fight for freedom, we had lost that spirit along the way, well, most of us had.

Once the waves, and creaking of wood became the clear sounds, I sighed. Looking up at Adewale, and Edward, I was motioned up. I walked up toward the wheel, unable to hold eye contact with Edward. I spoke down to my boots "What shall I attend to captain?"

"Sorry love?, I didn't hear you" he teased.

He heard me, he just wanted to force me to look up. I looked up, my eye contact evasive, I repeated my question.

"Attend to? " he chuckled a rather dirty laugh to himself.

"I give up" I muttered. I was about to turn heel when he called me to wait.

Amidst laughter he stated "Wait, they are doing repairs below deck, you can aid them"

I hurried myself below deck, to find a few men about mending boards about the hull, they barely cast a glance toward me. I wasn't acknowledged until I aided them with holding the heavier boards, they did not dismiss my aid. So in a strained silence we worked hard, as my muscles strained, the sweat dripped down the small of my back, and down my temples, but I did not complain. When we finally finished, one of the men ribbed my side, and passed me an ale, we all drank to a job well done. The ale was foul but I forced it down, containing my distaste. "Girl can take her ale, maybe she isn't so bad" he laughed.

After that I was able to start a dialogue with the crew, getting to know the few of who I had just done a hard days work, and it wasn't yet over. Mick was gruff, and didn't say much, but surprised with his amazing singing voice. Harper was fresh faced, the youngest of the crew, had many stories, many embellished but you still enjoyed the telling, as his enthusiasm was infectious. Wyston was the one cracking the jokes, his beard, and hair untamed, making him appear more intimating than he truly was. It was him who had passed me the ale, I was grateful for their begrudged acceptance, that as the day passed became more at ease. I came to realize as we disbanded, to go to about other work, that I should not familiarize myself with these men should I be intent upon betraying Edward to the Templar's, giving them the foothold Cole desired. It was bad enough I was starting to like Edward, to take to the whole crew then betray them all, would be no easy task for one who values honesty. But as I was set odd jobs, the cat calls, and inquires to price became less serious, and more of a joke. I would rather they not take to me, nor I to them, but as they offered their comradery, I could not deny them.

After the work was done, other crew members took to deck, allowing the weary to rest. I was looking out to sea as the night rolled in, a serious look upon my face. I was lost in the shadow, and hypnotic waves, the moonlight glinting across them, the only light.

"It can't be that bad" Edward joked, taking up beside me.

"If you only knew" I stated with a heavy sigh.

Not turning to him to betray the expression upon my face, I was afraid that would convey too much. To make matters worse Edward placed his hand upon my shoulder and stated "We will get him back for you, the prize is grand one, we will pay that ransom, and reunited you"

I looked to him, his earnest expression, only pained me. Why could he not have said something inappropriate, instead he was giving me kindness I did not deserve. "Do not stay out here too long love, we are not far from our goal, I will need all hands on deck come the dawn"
I closed my eyes, feeling his hand leave my shoulder. I remained transfixed upon the dark waves for a time, until my mind was so over run, I could take it no longer. I slipped in beside Edward, I knew that I would not rest easy until this was done. I had made up my mind, it had to be done. I did not take this decision lightly, it would pain me to do this, but I had no choice I told myself, before my eyelids became heavy.
Chapter Summary

Alicia finds the questions running through her mind overwhelming. After a communication with Cole, she finds an unexpected outlet for her anger at the lack of control.

In the dead of night my communicator sprung to life, shocking me awake. I struggled to edge out of the bed without waking Edward. As in the night he seemed to have tangled his arms around me, I pulled free, hoping Cole wouldn't grow impatient with my initial silence. I pulled out of the captains quarters, pulling to bow away from prying eyes. I placed my hand to my mouth to disguise what I was doing, as I wouldn't know how to explain it away should someone see me.

"What is it Cole?" I finally whispered.

"Are you following our plan?" He hissed.

"Yes, we will have it soon" feeling a sting of guilt, I hated Cole, it frustrated me I couldn't simply ring his neck. "Can I speak with my husband please" I pleaded.

"Only for a moment, just so you know we have them" he grumbled as if human decency was a chore.

"Alicia, all of this doesn't make any sense, but whatever brings you back to us. I wish you could see, Alice, I talk about you to her all the time, so she knows you" he was cut short, I was silently wept, keeping my eyes to sea, I wanted the rage but I wouldn't risk their safety to give myself a second of peace. So I remained silent as I was threatened ever so politely, just giving the odd word of agreement, or acknowledgement that I had heard the vile words hissing in my ear.

I turned to see Adewale a bit away from me, looking at me with curiosity, and suspicion. I nodded to him, I was about to pass him, returning to the captains quarters. He grabbed my arm, halting me, he didn't say anything for a moment. Dropping his voice to a hushed warning "Edward may trust you, blinded by his affection for you. I do not have that problem, I am unsure of your true motives for being here, and if you are up to anything underhanded, I will find out, trust me"

He released my arm, stepping away, allowing me to pass. He didn't know how conflicted I was at having to be underhanded, it did not sit right with me. I was now worried about being discovered, so I had to be more careful, with me being more deceptive. This was difficult, but hearing Shay's voice had steeled my resolve. When he spoke of Alice it brought tears to my eyes, separated from my daughter so soon, had been like some tearing my heart out, I wanted to see them again. Was it so wrong to want a normal life like everyone else, even if the price was paid by an unknowing group. I wished I had never met Cole, that bitter thought was my last before I found a short repose from the many questions in my head.

I was shook lightly into consciousness, to see Edward armed, and ready. His blue eyes caught me off guard for a moment as I connected with them, he smiled gently. "Ah if only there was time to talk you round, I would love to try. But we need all hands on deck"

I found clothes had been laid out for me, as had swords, I was an able enough fighter given my experiences thus far. I dress quickly, placing the sword in the most advantageous place, ease to hand, I tested it to assure myself. The blade was light, with a slight curve, it was easy to wield, good to know as it could save my life. As I stepped out, there was a strange hush over the crew, I turned to see Edward looking through a spy glass, to a ship that for the time was a mere dot upon the horizon. But everyone was prepared for a fight, I wondered if I would be lucky enough to not be one of the people caught in hail of motor, or cannon fire. At full mast we sailed toward our intended target at speed as the winds favoured us, I held to my balance as we drew closer, I heard Adewale call for caution as there was human cargo upon that ship. It was strange to hear the term, I often forgot how much things had changed. As we drew into range, they began to throw fire barrels to slow our pursuit down, then they did something unspeakable, they threw the slaves chained, and weighed into the depths. I was about to dive in after them, in the hope of doing something, I couldn't let this stand. I was halted by Wystan "Nothing you can do for them now, other than avenge their cruel fates"

My breath caught in my throat, it was difficult to accept, allowing them to die in such a manner. I felt a range bubble within my blood, audibly I was growling "Lets kill the bastards" I growled.

"That's is it, save your rage for the fight lass, we will see them suffer" he assured me.

I stared to the sea which had willingly taken those innocent souls, and I cursed it, as I could do nothing else. That helpless feeling would be taken out upon the crew of this ship, I would as Wystan suggested make them suffer, I narrowed my eyes, hoping for us to catch up with them. When we finally drew in range, all hell broke loose to the cry of "Fire"

I barely heard him call "Brace" as they returned fire. Thankful for the reinforced hull, the damage was lessened due to it. Their ship however was shoddy, and being torn to shreds. I had stood frozen in place for the first hail of cannon fire, pure luck had me in the safest place upon the ship, I only heard the crashes of the impacts that shook the ship. They were soon to be easy pickings,
when two flag ships sailed in their defence, they hadn't been viable until we turned the corner of the cliffs. Now under fire from two able, and one fighting for survival. The next cries of brace had me dropping to my knees, mortars just missing out ship, as Edward maneuvered effortlessly out of range. It is was not for his speed, and tactics, and the crews amazing aim, we would have been the ones sinking to the murky depths. I watched as one ship fell to the hail of our mortars, the other put up quite a fight. As the smoke cleared the ship we had been chasing was free to be boarded, and the other two had sunk beneath the waves, a few crew holding to debris in the water. I finally was able to see the deck clearly, and in painied me to see it run red, bodies littering our own decks, only fuelled the fury running through me.

We pulled along side, hooking them and drawing them in. I wouldn't have imagined I would feel so eager to cross over to this ship and show no mercy, as this was out of character, but then this was not a normal situation, not from my time. I was the first to make the leap across, a burly man spotted me, and tried to rush at me, but the only thing he connected with was the steel of my blade, drawing the blade harshly, and I didn't care for his cry of agony, but I did put him out of his misery slicing his throat. I could barely recognise this person I became, charging like a bull through their crew, cutting down any who dared cross my path. I was now quite a sight, covered in the blood of my enemies, these cruel men deserved no less. I was now searching out there captains when a cry of surrender sounded, our crews cheered at the victory, of which we had paid with yet more lives of our own crew. I did not cheer, nor did I stop proceeding to the captains quarters, the rage still fuelling me. I booted the door so harshly, it pulled loose of its frame. I tore over toward the man hiding behind the table "Are you the captain of this ship?" I hissed.

"Yes" he stated definitely. "You wont get my cargo now pirate scum"

He was proud of his actions, I drew my sword approaching him with slow considered steps, when Edward burst in, gripping my wrist "Hold back your blade, we need information"

I pulled against his grip, my sword slowly freed of its sheath, my arm shaking from the effort against the resistance of Edwards arm. "Alicia god damn it, that's an order" he snapped.

Reluctantly I dropped my sword, and stormed free of the captains quarters, pulling free of Edwards grip. I could not stay in that room, as I emerged, the crew that saw me were taken back by the vicious nature of my rampage, as was I. The rage slowly ebbing away, as did my energy, I found I had to press my head to the door for a time to recover my senses, and make sense of what I had just done. I wasn't aware I had such rage, but I could see that failing being able to get at Cole, another evil would do. I aided the crew in taking what we could from the wrecks, and the slavers ship. This kept me busy, as I did not want to face the blood upon my hands, or the blood staining my face. So despite the exhaustion I know felt, I aided with repairs, until I could barely lift, even then I did not stop, I only stopped when I was again ordered to do so.

"Dear god Alicia, you have run yourself to ground today. And I did not know you had it in you, you tore through their crew like a mad dog" Wystan stated with a mild hint of pride, and shock.

"I didn't know I had it in me either. All the rage had to go somewhere I guess" I sighed heigly. Finally feeling the pain, and exhaustion take me, shakily I leant upon the starboard bow, my chest heaving.

"Well, I think I well earned ale is in order, wouldn't you" it was not a question rather a statement, as he returned quickly with mug pressing it into my now shaky hand, it spilled over the edges, I looked down into the amber liquid, and downed it swiftly, not tasting it, but being thankful of its warmth, and its mild numbing. I drunk enough to dull my sense's, singing along with the remaining crew, knowing that we would have to soon hear the call of those who had not survived. I did not wish to hear such news with a clear, and soba mind. We all stepped out on deck, holding a respectful silence as we remembered those who had fallen, many names I did not recognise, but it was still difficult to hear. But when I heard Harpers name, I had to cover my mouth, as a sob came unbidden from my lips. I tried to remain contained, but he was so young, and he was gone, I couldn't believe it. As we all disbanded, I took to the cot in the captains quarters, with slow unsteady steps. I staggered in to find Edward keenly staring at the map before him, he was gone, I couldn't believe it. As we all disbanded, I took to the cot in the captains quarters, marking our new course. My bleary eyes took back to the welcoming sight of the bed, I was exhausted. I grumbled, I was so close to escaping the inevitable conversation. I turned, looking to him, barely able to hold eye contact. "Jesus love have you been drinking?"

"Why is it so strange, was a victory was it not" I almost spat.

"We got what we needed, but at a cost" he stated sternly.

I sighed heavily "Of course you know that" I stated with remorse for my angry words.

"Where did you learn to fight like that?" he stated with pleasant surprise.

"My husband taught me"

"Hmm, I would hate to meet him with a blade in his hand" he laughed.

"I do miss him Edward, and my daughter, I barely got to hold her before she was taken from me"

"I am sorry, I did not realise they had your daughter, must be difficult for you" he stated tentatively.
"Yes, I want to lash out at those responsible, but I cant get at them without hurting my family" I stressed, the truth flowing from lips, still guarded, but the truth never the less.

"You look exhausted, first I would suggest you clean up, then rest if you can"

He threw a wet cloth to me, I failed to catch it in time, and with my balance off, I stumbled trying to reach it. Edward held back his amusement at my current state, he helped me up, taking the cloth in hand, leaning me upon his table. The cloth was cool against my skin, as he freed my skin of the blood coating it. He had to be rough as the blood was dry, and caked on, layer after layer. Finally my face was clear, he held my chin in his hand, looking into my eyes he asked "Ade told me you were wondering the decks last night, what were you doing?"

Under his scrutiny I felt nervous. "I was trying to get my head right, the waves are soothing"

"You sort your head out?" He continued to question me, as if expecting to catch me out, but hoping not to.

"No, it hurts to think, too much going on in there, I just need to do, that's it"

He didn't release my face away "If things were different, we would be quite a match you and I" he smiled widely.

"maybe we would" I retorted, not caring to think of the idea.

"Yes, fierceome pirates, we would take these seas together, knowing a freedom most will never know" It was beginning to sound like he was trying to sell the idea to me, as he continued. "I would give you passion like no other" his smile becoming wicked.

"Things are as they are" I stated plainly, wanting him to stop, as I found his words were swaying me. I was unsure if it was my addled mind, or his charm, but either way I could not, and would not follow that urge.

"I know there is a spark here Alicia, despite your objections. So say what you will, I know better" he smiled knowingly, his confidence was irksome, more so due to the element of truth within it.

He released me, allowing me to pass. I took straight to the cot, not managing a straight line, but getting there never the less. Edward was chuckling to himself. I ignored the fact that I liked the sound of his laughter. And closed my eyes, wishing the world to fade away.
The prize

Chapter Summary

Alicia finds no answers, the path to the observatory is rife with danger, Edward being one of the many dangers.

I forced my heavy eyelids open, my painfully dry eyes shut in a relax to the light, and air that invaded. I took my fingers to my eyes, massaging them gingerly. A grating laughter rang out, I would have jolted up, but my head was swimming, so it required slow and considered motion, to ease the nausea, which aboard a ship was no mean feat considering the sway of the waves. I tried to focus instead upon the other person in the room, tears burned my dry eyes, I squinted until they adjusted to the harsh sunlight. Edward was standing in the doorway with a wry grin upon his face.

"Close the door" I pleaded.

"Delicate this morning lass?" he snickered.

Even with the pain in my head, I couldn't help but notice the light in his blue eyes, feeling some shame for noticing such aspects of him. I shook my head, it succeed in tearing my mind away from Edwards finer attributes, a wave of nausea forced me to hold to my head, and regret the action.

He finely pried himself free of the doorway, and wondered over. As the light lessened, the pain became less sharp, and more dull. "Thank you" I stressed.

"I wouldn't thank me yet lass, we have a meeting that will bring us to riches, so all hands will be required on deck, and that includes you" his grin wicked, he was enjoying this all too much.

"You are enjoying this aren't you" I growled, not at all amused.

"very much, its entertaining” he laughed.

"Yes I am sure" I growled, and left slowly, holding the door open for longer than necessary. Calling back "I thought you needed some fresh air" his tone light with amusement.

The blinding light fading for a second time, I tried to not recall the events of yesterday, or my errant thoughts, I had a job to do, and a family to return to. I dressed in the stolen clothes from the slave ship, ill fitting, the pants too baggy, and the shirt tight, I couldn't possibly go on deck like this. I looked more alike a whore than when that madam had dressed me, the swell of my breast tearing pulling the lace free, almost freeing me of the top. I looked to my old clothes, and wondered if they would last another day. But the rank nauseating smell told me there was no more wear left in them. I looked around, hesitating, wondering how rake thin the poor woman who had worn this before me was. I crossed my arms over my chest when the door swung open suddenly.

"What in gods name is taking you so long, surely you have suffered after a night of drinking lass, we cant wait all day, they will think it special treatment" he stated jovially.

He looked to me curiously when he noted my rigid body language, and the blush spreading across my cheeks "What is it?” he smirked, amused by my embarrassment.

"I have seen many a woman, you needn't be embarrassed" he assured me.

"I don't care how many you have seen, you're not seeing me, I need something that covers me" I pleaded, feeling the flush in my cheeks, and the throbbing in my head.

"Well, I need to see the problem, before I can do anything, you maybe exaggerating" he teased, taking my wrists, and pulling at them gently, I resisted, holding my arms in place. "Come now, if you wont trust me, I will invite the crew to aid me" his smile was in jest, but the look in his eyes showed a growing impatience, he wanted to gain that prize to set him up for life, and I was slowing him from reaching that goal.

I begrudgingly dropped my arms "Well I do see what you mean, this poor top can barely contain such an bounty” he barely contained his laughter, the word he had searched for didn't quite fit. As the amusement faded, his eyes became wide, and set upon me, I was growing nervous under his scrutiny. He closed his eyes, groaned inwardly, then he removed his jacket, and pulled his shirt free, I was startled at first, I didn't know what he was doing, until he threw it to me. I felt relieved when he backed off a little, but he did not leave, he waited, tapping his foot impatiently. "Come on now"

After letting my eyes linger upon his chest, and arms, I tried to look away, but catching sight of his tattoos, drew my eyes back. After a long silence, and him still remaining, I begged "Can I not have privacy?” desperate for him to leave.

"No, I think it only fair, you have seen me shirtless, and your hungry eyes have taken in the image of me” he purred.
"I did no such thing" I dropped my eyes instantly, revealing that I had indeed been enjoying the vision of his sculpted body, even though my head swam with the ache of the drink.

I turned my back to him, pulling the top free, I froze when I felt his hands take to my hips "Don't turn your back on a pirate" he teased, his voice low and seductive.

His warm breath teasing the skin upon my neck, I should have pulled away, told him to back off, but instead, we both waited in that tense silence, his fingers becoming restless, taking to my bare shoulders, gently tracing down my arms. I shivered, his lips pressed to my ear. The warmth of his skin pressed to mine, neither of us making a move, neither of us backing off. My heart was pounding as heavily as my head, his hands gripped to my arms slowly pulling me back against him, his lips now dropping dangerously close to the nape of my neck, the anticipation, and tension were palpable, it took longer than it should to draw me back to my senses. A voice calling for Edward was what it took to finally break the spell, both of us drew free of our reverie "I knew there was more here" he stated in an assured manner, that brought back the sense of annoyance.

I pulled his shirt over my head, and he fastened his coat, and awaited me to walk ahead of him "after you lass" his grin wide.

I walked upon deck, shielding my eyes from the sun. Greeted by a thick welsh brogue, and a man dressed in a fanciful manner, yet his way was alike to that of a pirate, harsh, crude and demanding. "Well we can't wait all day, we need to draw to that port just as darkness takes the sky, too long and you won't see shit"

I took to manning the ship with the crew, this man whomever he was seemed to think he was in charge. I did not like him, he didn't seem trustworthy, but I would not question Edward, but I eyed him with suspicion. As the darkness drew in, he told us of how Edward needed to gain a Portuguese flag, so we could slip amongst their ships, to get to the prize he needed.

to How did you come upon this information?" I pressed.

"The less you know the better my love" he quipped.

Now I was more certain of him, he was not to be trusted. I did not like the moments in between this sage's demands, or at least that's what they called him. I felt on edge, hoping to not hear a sound of gunfire, listening intently should Edward need our aid. Somehow he managed to return with the empty blood vial, which as far as I knew didn't constitute treasure. Now not only was I suspicious, I was confused. He told both myself, and the crew that all would soon be revealed, his vague words did not instil me with confidence. But Edward seemed keen to follow him to this observatory.

It was not a swift journey. I kept a weary eye upon this sage, I would have preferred less time in his strangely entitled company. He thought himself above all aboard this ship, that was sadly evident. I did not let him draw me into conversation, instead a more distasteful character forced me into conversation, the communicator sprung to life "Are you anywhere near our goal" his voice was not that comforting one I could barely recall, but rather alike the hiss of a poisonous snake in my ear.

"The observatory the right place?" I whispered, drawing away from the prying eyes of the crew, and the sage. Adewale had seemed to either grow to trust me, or he was holding his silence, and watching me from a distance, so I couldn't take chances.

"Perfect, you steal the skull, and tell the Templar's the location, and you can come home to your family" I would have felt relief, but doing the bidding of this twisted bastard only made any victory a hollow one. And as much as I wished to return to Shay, and Alice, I didn't trust Cole, this would not be the end of it. The silence that followed his order, and the fact he had not allowed me to speak to Shay both worried, and annoyed me. I was left once again looking to sea, no answers, no control, and no idea what I planned to do next.
Alicia and Edward have more tense exchanges, this forces her to make changes that end in an unexpected complication

It seemed that the long journey toward the observatory Edward had intended to make things as awkward as possible, he laid the charm on thick, not failing to make a comment should I be innocently wondering near him. I tried to remain among the crew, appreciating the peace, and illusion of safety they granted me. I knew I should not be thinking of Edward as a danger, but the flirtations no longer felt harmless, the lust brewing in his bright blue eyes darkened them every time we spoke alone.

I still had no desire to cheat upon Shay, nor to ruin Haytham's future, but his charm was chipping away at my resistance, his smile beginning to lead me to smile in return, I had stopped backing away when he drew close, the unfulfilled desire, and tension was growing thick.

Many times he caught me alone, and I welcomed the distraction from my thoughts. But the distraction often became too much, when he pressed me against the rail of the ship, pressing his body to mine, whispering all he planned to do once he got me alone in his quarters, amidst heavy breaths. His stares were intense, once he caught within them, I felt that if he drew closer and finally kissed me, I would return his kisses with my own desire that he stoked each time he pressed against me, traced my skin with his fingers, the skin rough, but the touch gentle. He stroked my cheek delicately, I dropped my gaze desperate to avoid those tense exchanges we had been having, but he always managed to draw me in. I was not prepared for his bold advance, as he had done nothing as yet. He brushed away my hair from my neck, and instead of lingering close, his lips took to the skin, making their slow and torturous path down to my shoulder. I gripped his broad shoulders, gasping. My sex throbbing, begging him to continue. But I couldn't allow him to continue despite desiring it more than I should.

"Edward" I breathed, my tone speaking my desire clearly, as his name came out in pleasured groan. This only encouraged him to continue, his hands had held to my hips, but the mere sound escaping my lips gave them need to snake over my torso.

Again I intended to call his name forcefully, but I moaned as his fingers traced over my sides, forcing me to shiver in delight. I finally took my hands to his and halted their progress. He wasn't the only one to feel the disappointment "I can't" I whimpered.

"God damn it, I can do things to your body that your husband could never even dream of" he growled softly.

"I am sure you could, but I still can't" I stated with more confidence, now that the desire wasn't addling my mind. After that, I couldn't risk another minute alone with Edward, it was obvious I wanted him. I could see his appeal, his charm disarming, his smile both sweet and wicked. His eyes both warm, and stormy, I needed to stop thinking of his good attributes and focus upon his bad ones, failing that avoid him entirely.

I volunteered to take on a role within the skeleton crew, so my nights were spent up on deck, doing any task Adewale gave me, I was glad to be kept busy, and away from Edward. The downside was that the sage was often wondering the deck, and he was tiresome to speak to, so full for his own importance. I tried to avoid speaking to him, and most days I managed to avoid him, but on this day he caught me relaxing between jobs, I tried to sneak away, but he caught me, I winced before I slowly turned toward him.

"You know there is something off about you" the sage remarked.

I continued walking passed, this did not stop him, he continued unfazed "and I couldn't quite tell at first, but being an old soul, I can tell a displaced one when I see it"

I should not have froze upon hearing his words, but he had taken me by surprise with his observations. I tried to shake it off as nothing, and continue away from him. But he had taken to following after me "I can assume your not from a time past as I know old souls"

I couldn't shake him, he was like a pit bull, his persistence worried me, as did the volume of his voice. I stopped turning to face him, and before I uttered a word he added "so it must be the future, how far I wonder" he mused in a hushed tone as if reading my mind, he posed it like it was a fact rather than a question.

My eyes widened, I had not credited the sage with any intelligence due to the ego, and bravado he displayed. I was taken back, and unsure what to say. "Well your silence rather confirms my suspicions then"

"I have no idea what your talking about" I tried to dismiss his words, but he was not the fool I had thought him to be.

I was backing away slowly, he grabbed my wrist, pulling me back over. I unintentionally yelped in surprise. He held a blade to my throat "You are going to tell me of my future, and how I can get all that I desire" his tone threatening, and his body language was intended to intimidate. But as
quick as I was, I had no weapon to hand, and the blade pressed to my throat, was at a precarious angle, if I moved even slightly to escape, he could kill me.

"If you kill me, I can hardly tell you anything" I whispered.

"Ah I get the sense that your a fighter, and that your rather attached to Edward, so if you do not give me everything I wish to know, I will kill him, as that would effect time more than your death, and I wont stop there trust me" he hissed, his smile cruel, and his eyes filled with a rage ready to be unleashed should I refuse. His grip tightened, then released suddenly, as Adewale approached. He wondered away as if we had been exchanging mere pleasantries. I took a deep breath, turning to Adewale hoping to appear not fussed by the exchange, the chill creeping my spine must have been telling in my eyes, as rather than suspicion, he looked upon me with concern "Are you alright Alicia?"

"Yes, I hope you have more work for me, idle hands and all" I stated hastily, my voice wavered, he assigned me new tasks, but he now took an eagle eye toward the sage.

It was comforting to not be the one under his suspicion, through the rest of the night Adewale made sure the sage did not get close, and when he did, Adewale always called me over. I thanked him as I wearily took to the captains cabin, he simply nodded, with a smile playing about his lips. I was grateful of his aid, this was all I needed, additional complications, as if time travel wasn't complicated enough. Somehow this man could tell that I was not meant to be here, and now he wanted to see what he could get in return for staying his blade. It would have been easier if he had threatened me, but it was as if he figured out the cruellest way to get at me, and what would be the repercussions if I killed him, the easiest way to fix this would sadly be with my own death, then that would put my family in danger.

This was a no win situation, and I was sick of ending up in these. I would have to speak to the one person who I was sure was not willing to help me, but I had a complication, and I would have to ask him what I should do, but his interests weren't mine. I tried to communicate with Cole, but he was either busy, or ignoring me. I was exhausted both psychically, and mentally by the time I reached the cabin. I stepped inside "Jesus Ade must have worked you hard, you look exhausted"

Without thinking I wondered over to him, and in my need for comfort took my arms around him, he seemed shocked at first. He eventually took his arms around me, relaxing into each others arms, after a time he began to stroke my hair gently "Are you ok?" he pressed.

"I am sorry, I..." my words seemed to drift away. His eyes warm, and filled with a genuine care. I could if circumstances were different lose myself in those eyes. His sandy hair pulled back, a few strands pulled loose, and were tickling at my skin as I looked up at him.

"Look, I will let you get some rest, as you are clearly in need of it, but if I felt your mind clear.." he growled as he trailed off, leaving with a gentle smile.

His kindness, and charm made him all the more alluring. I groaned inwardly, wanting this to be over.

Before my exhaustion took over, I brought me thoughts to Shay, and Alice "god how I wish I was with you both now, what cruel fate would bring us together just to tear us apart" I mused, hoping in vain for some kind of response. I recalled the sound of Shay's Irish brogue, the loving smile, and I recalled all the tiny features I had committed to memory of the brief moment with my Alice before she was snatched away. It was funny in a twisted way, I had never wanted children, but now I only wanted to return to them. The sinking feeling growing within me, told me that I would likely never get the chance. This painful thought brought tears to my eyes, and as I drifted into an exhaustive sleep, I wept for the family I had never wanted, and now did not wish to lose.
I want it all

Chapter Summary

The sage shows his true colours

I awoke feeling groggy, I had been in a deep sleep, but there was a call for all hands. I smoothed my hair back, wiped the sleep from my eyes, and dazed I stumbled on deck, hiding amongst the crew. The sun was blinding, so I stepped behind the tallest man, I found temporary relief there. He told his crew that he was going to bring them back fortune; they would soon be rich men. I flinched at the sound of the Sages voice “Alicia, you will be joining us” I knew it was no offer.

“Did you not say the island was dangerous?” Edward pressed, telling me to remain.

“She is a resourceful lass, she will help us won’t you” his steely gaze upon me, quickly shifted to Edward to remind me of his threat.

I sighed inwardly “Edward how else will you survive without my help” I joked.

“Alicia I know you’re a capable woman, but there are many hidden dangers, I do not want you hurt” he stated with such sweet serenity, it warmed my heart. But I knew if I didn’t go, he was at greater risk.

“Edward, I am grateful for your concern, but I believe I will join you, I will not change my mind. I have your back” I stated shooting a glare to the sage, who was unmoved, his over confident arrogance infuriated me; I wanted to wipe that smug look off his face. But instead I followed on. Stepping off toward the jungle “Stay close” Edward cautioned.

There were hidden guardians upon the island, they lurked in the undergrowth unperturbed by the snakes that also slithered, and prowled the jungle. There was rarely a warning or sign before they leapt free of the under growth, or thick brush, luckily I had kept my wits about me. They were fast and disturbingly quiet, I had saved Edward, but he quickly returned the favour. My blood was pumping fast and my adrenaline high, every tiny sound reached my ears, every slight motion, I was on high alert.

A panther broke free of the brush, I launched the blade in my hand, but due to speed, I missed. I stood alone in plain sight, unarmed; I cowered as the beast leapt. A loud shot rang out, I opened my eyes wearily, the panther was flat to the ground. I turned to thank Edward, but it was not him. I turned back to see the sage gun in hand, a sickly smile drawn across his face. “Can’t have you dying on me now can I” he whispered darkly as he passed me.

Edward and I continued forth, clearing the jungle of all dangers, cutting a clear path for the sage. We were exhausted, sweat pouring down our faces. The sage flounced in behind us, stepping toward the temple before us, as we caught our breath he proceeded to open the doors. He then shot every crew member he had brought with him square in the head; they all fell to ground just as swiftly as the panther had with a resounding thud. In the silence that followed the carnage, both Edward and myself stood shocked and still. Edward and I looked to one another, then to the dead. He had killed them as though they were nothing to him; I looked to him stepping in front of Edward. I held my hands up. “You needn’t worry, you are still both of use, and now the treasure can be split three ways aye” he stated almost merrily.

Edward cautiously continued lifting the box, the sage added before stepping aside “you needed to see that I have no compunction of killing, so this is a warning to give me what I wish, or captain Kenway will be next”.

Those poor men were killed to push home a message, I had already heard, I hated him so much in that moment, I was tempted to kill him with my bare hands. But Edward was here, how would I explain this, explain losing his fortune, and how would I explain cold blooded murder. And how would his death effect time, my family. So despite the look of disgust upon my face, I pulled back, and allowed him to go ahead of me, feigning politeness “after you” I scowled.

This only amused him, which added to my growing fury. At least at the back of the group I could keep an eye on both of them. Edward was looking round in wonder, I would have also marvelled at the amazing ruins of a time long past, but I could not drag my watchful eyes free of the sage, he was cruel, greedy, and full of his own importance. I couldn’t trust him, so I could not lose sight of him, not for a second. When we entered the final chamber, it was expansive with a strange contraption at the centre.

Edward turned to me “Is it not grand Alicia?”

I nodded, not caring for the place, my only concern was him, and all those linked to him, my family included.

Edward was amazed; his eyes widened as the contraption sprang to life with the skull, and a vial of blood inside, revealing the secrets, and current words of the owner of the blood. I had seen many modern convinces that acted in a similar fashion, invading the privacy of others, while claiming it was only for our safety, all lies.

“This will be worth a fortune” Edward smiled, thinking this was finally the last time he would have to fight for the life and freedoms he wanted.
The sage pulled the skull free when all fell silent, and before I could do anything he hit Edward across the face with the skull sending him over the edge. “You son of bitch” I cried.

I raced toward the edge of the platform, searching wildly for a sign that Edward was safe. “Edward” I called out in desperation.

My heart pounding heavily “Edward” I cried once more, still silence reigned.

“Please be ok” I whispered “Please”

Finally a cry sounded “Alicia, are you ok?”

“I am fine, are you?”

“I’ll live, but I can’t say the same for the supposed sage”

He had been lurking behind me, and he stepped forward in that moment to state “You have nothing I am afraid, I have the skull, and the girl”

He grabbed my arm roughly, dragging me back from the edge “You will come with me” he hissed.

“Bloody hell man, take your damn skull, leave her be” Edward cried from below.

“Sorry, but who doesn’t realise a treasure when he sees it, should be relieved of such a prize”

I knew he was speaking of the future he hoped I could craft for him, with the knowledge I had.

“Come quietly or I will blow his brains out” the sage demanded as I dragged my feet in protest.

I fell in step with him, as we left the way we came in, sealing the door behind us. The last thing I saw was Edwards’s broken expression as I disappeared behind that door. I could hear him beating upon the stone crying after us. I could only be thankful that he was alive, and uninjured. I could only hope he would remain that way.

“Now on to that future you will assure me” his dark eyes alight with the joy, he knew I could give him answers.

This was the first time I hoped Cole would tell me to kill him, as this man could not do any good for this world; he only sought to take from it. I could see he had been used, and abused for what others could take from him. But it did not excuse the innocent death toll growing upon his hands. I wanted to be away from this man, not stuck with him. I was growing to despise time travel, the past had given with one hand, and now it sought to take it all away. I was doomed to misery no matter the year.
Chapter Summary

languishing in the cells aboard the sage's ship Alicia receives an unexpected communication

The sage was a contemptible, egotistical man, and to be forced to spend time with him, with him proclaiming his destiny. "Well I expected to live a short rich life, but thanks to you I can assure that I live a long, and rich and powerful life." his accent was heavy, and expression was infuriatingly smug.

I was still waiting for Cole to get back to me, he wasn't making me wait, his silence would only mean he was up to something. So his silence gave me no comfort. The sage also saw to it while the communicator remained silent I knew no comfort, he had me in the brig below deck, caged like an animal. He was looking at me curiously "I know much of history which makes me wonder what the future is like?"

I looked up under my heavy eyelids, I had not manage to sleep much since I was taken. I found what little rest I got was plagued by dreams of Edward in danger, they were so vivid, I often awoke with a start. I would forget for a moment where I was, and be frightened and confused by my surroundings. When I recalled my predicament it did not ease my mind, only resign me to my fate. I was a tool for others to use, I was frustrated and fed up of this lot in life. The sage rattled the bars to break me of my trance, I shook my head to try and awaken but I could not shake this exhaustion.

"Bah so far my dear you're more trouble than you're worth, you had better start talking or I will see what kind of price I can get for you." He threatened.

I barely registered his words, I slumped against the bars as he stormed away. I remained slunk against the bars until my head and back forced me to take to ground. I didn't care that the wood was harsh against my skin, I lay upon my side, slowly I curled into a protective ball. I was just drifting into an exhausted haze when the communicator came to life, pulling me back to consciousness.

"Alicia are you there?" I would recognise that smooth Irish brogue anywhere.

"Shay? Is that you?" I whispered. Tears moistened my pained eyes.

"Yes, I had no idea how this thing worked, but I have seen it used enough to know. Are you ok?" I tried to imagine Shay using modern technology, and the image brought the ghost of a smile to my lips. I had never been allowed to enjoy time with my family, my time with my daughter was all to brief, I hoped she knew I loved her.

"I am fine" I lied, but I was so happy to hear his voice, I just wanted to know my family was ok. "Are you and Alice ok?" I strained, hating the thought of them being held captive.

"We would be better if you were here with us. Alice is thriving. Cole is not one for kindness to captives, but thankfully the other templars are the decent sort, so we eat well enough. Where are you?"

I had wanted to listen to his voice just a little longer, how could I tell him all that had befallen me since I got here, and that now I was face to ground in a prison cell. I didn't want to worry him so I told him as little as possible, which made me worry he may be doing the same. Tears welled in my eyes as I whispered "I am aboard a ship, she is not better than the Morrigan I assure you" I tried in vain to force some levity to such an agonising situation.

"No ship is" He returned.

"Shay?" I pressed.

"Yes my love"

"I miss you both so much. I love you, please make sure our daughter knows I love her" I confessed in a tearful sob.

"We miss you too. I didn't think I could love anyone given the lives we lead, but I love you more than I knew I could. And Alice I love her more than life. I hate that you are not here, we should be a family. Please come back to us" he stated his voice heavy with emotion.

The link fell silent after those last loving but painful words, it tore my heart in half to not be with them. I called out his name, but the connect had either been lost or cut. Cole may have forced Shay to talk to me as motivation, but I knew his words were sincere. I sighed heavily, I dropped my head back to ground. I did not get the chance to wallow in the silence that followed as cannon fire broke it, I pulled myself up, I wondered how safe I would be in here. I jolted back as the cannon fire tore through the ship's hull, one breaking a hole in the wall, enough for me to escape my prison. I climbed up on deck, not that this was a safer place to be, but I was at least able to take a blade from some poor fallen crewman. I looked across to the ship now circling us, it was the jackdaw, I would have been ecstatic had we not been under heavy cannon fire. While trying to
remain alive, I hoped that they couldn't manage to sink the jackdaw. I need not have worried. Robert's was an inept captain, Edward was a quick thinker, and soon we were dead in the water. I was exhausted from evading motor fire, and cannon blasts, giving me a second to wonder how anyone survived to old age in this way of life.

They were boarding our ship, I heard Edward call "Drag them to hell lads"

I knew that amidst the fighting and gunshots I had to be careful, people may not have the time to recognise me before running at me, so I readied myself. I used the blade in hand to begin taking down Roberts poor crew, I felt for them, but Edwards crew was the one to which I was loyal. As I was dragging my blade free of another unfortunate who had chosen to follow Robert's when a hand gripped my trailing wrist. I felt a pistol press into my throat with Roberts declaring "Edward it would be wise to ask your crew to drop their weapons unless you want me to shoot your little concubine here."

Edward turned and looked to him, his eyes widened upon seeing me, he held up his hands "Don't do anything foolish Robert's I am dropping my weapons"

He ordered his crew to do the same, with no guidance from Cole, I was forced to make a split-second decision as Roberts turned his gun upon Edward. I had slowly edged my blade so I could force it back, killing him as he killed me had been my plan, though not much of a plan. I plunged it backward, the pain made his aim waver, he missed before staggering back. I was free of his grip, I had no idea if killing the sage would affect the future, but I could not see Edward hurt. I watched the sage breathe his last without a shred of emotion, I was just glad it was over. I turned and rushed into Edward's arms, he was shocked by the sudden embrace. He pulled me to him "I am so glad you're ok" He whispered.

"I am glad you too are ok" my voice cracked a little. I was so relieved.

He released me smiling widely "$ There was me assuming there was no treasure aboard" he joked.

I raised an eyebrow at the corny sentiment, it did manage to make me smile. I turned looking to the crew to notice a few men were a miss. "$ What happened to the crew?" I pressed.

"It's a long story, I will tell you later. Let us take what we need, burn this ship and send it to the deep."

I stepped over to the Jackdaw, feeling free of a heavy burden, still wondering what the ramifications of my actions. I watched as Robert's ship was set alight, the flames and explosives made short work of the vessel, it was consumed in seconds, drifting to the ocean floor. I was glad to see him resigned to the ocean floor, his life was a short one just as he had thought it would be. I was glad to see Edward unharmed but saddened to see so many crew members missing until I knew otherwise I could only assume them dead. So I grieved many losses, including the renewed pain of being parted from my family. Hearing Shay's voice again had made me wonder what was the right choice to make, as I knew we were we were heading, it would be there that I would be forced to decide the fate of my family or that of an innocent man.
The plan

Chapter Summary

Heading toward the observatory Alicia will soon have to make a plan.

We remained unhindered by the Templar's on our journey toward the observatory. This led me to believe they were ahead of us. I had not spoken of my ordeal since stepping foot back on the Jackdaw, the new crew were nice enough but it saddened me to not see a familiar face among the lot. Anne was a good quartermaster, she knew what she was doing, but I did miss Adewale.

Any moment alone with Edward I went to great lengths to assure it was brief, as I just wanted this nightmare to be over. I did not wish to enjoy his company, nor be pressed again about my time aboard the sage's ship. I remained tight lipped, it would do no one any good to speak of it least of all me.

I was sitting alone in the captain's cabin, staring into the distance. Spending so much time thinking was only making me feel restless. I was shocked by the sudden appearance of a drink by my arm.

"You look like you could use it," Edward smiled.

I had somehow managed to avoid him for days but in my daze I hadn't heard him come in, I was that lost in my own head. I watched him slump into the chair behind his desk. An exasperated sigh left his lips. "I just need you to tell me he didn't hurt you, and I will stop pressing the point."

I looked across to him, his eyes fixed upon me as if pleading for me to allay whatever fears or imaginings he might be having. I took the small mug of what I tell was rum before me, dropping my eyes to the amber liquid and wrinkling my nose at its offensive smell. But it was the only distraction to hand, and I needed one as I knew I would have to tell Edward yet more lies. I couldn't explain why the sage had taken me, or any of the threats. I didn't wish to burden him with the knowledge of the lack of sleep, poor treatment and imprisonment. So I knocked back the rum, the sharp bitterness forcing me to grimace, and cough as the warm liquid irritated my throat. I sighed heavily. Looking to Edward and forcing a smile, "No, he did not hurt me."

He narrowed his eyes, his suspicion evident. I shouldn't have taken so long to reply but my mind was awash with half-baked plans and misgivings about having to deceive Edward. My conscience was already weighted, it afforded me little peace. And whenever I was in Edward's company I felt uneasy, he was such a good man he did not deserve this. Power, greed and a twisted mind had drawn me in the middle, and unintentionally I had drawn other innocents into this chaos. I was quite sure I deserved all I was suffering, I had gone along with this however begrudgingly, and whatever my justifications.

"You seem troubled lass." Edward's voice cut through the spiral of blame, and confusion I was lost in.

"I am fine," I replied in a flat tone.

"You're a bad liar love," he remarked with a grin pulling at the corner of his lips.

"I think I need another," I pointed the empty mug before me. I wanted to forget.

He seemed reluctant to pour, but he eventually filled the mug. Three or was it four drinks later, my head was swimming. I was feeling a little drunk, I was thankful that I could no longer think straight.

"One more," I exclaimed merrily. Not thinking allowed me to smile and laugh as my problems blurred into a pleasant haze.

"You have had enough," he looked to me with amusement.

I pouted, pulling up swiftly to find my legs a little unsteady. I gripped to the table to keep upright. Edward was laughing more vocally as I staggered. He pulled up to aid me, "To bed with you," he teased with a mocking grin.

"I can handle myself," I retorted.

"Of course you can," he snickered.

He led me over, and lay me down. He lingered a moment, probably due to my arm still being linked around his neck, despite the mild haze I felt anxious. His bright blue eyes held me in an unwavering stare, his fingers traced over my cheek. Temptation told me to pull him to me, but my conscience was louder. I had hurt enough people without intent, I had no right to do it knowingly.

"Do not look so worried I will behave," he assured me.

"It wasn't you I was worried about. I trust you, Edward," I smiled, pulling my arm free of him.

"Oh, you don't trust yourself around me lass." A wide devilish smile crossed his face. "It has to be my charm."

"Charm?" I mocked even though I knew he could be very charming. I berated myself for opening
my big mouth.

“Stop guessing, I am drunk remember my brain is addled.”

“Oh yes let’s blame the booze and make it easier on you.” A sly smile still evident upon his lips.

“Thank you.”

He crouched beside me, his smile still wide he looked to and whispered, “Pleasant dreams.”

It would have been easier on me had he left on that note but as I closed my eyes, I felt his lips press softly to my cheek and he remarked, “I trust you to Alicia. I will get you back to your family. I promise.”

That statement hurt to hear, I did not deserve his trust. I would soon be stabbing him in the back metaphorically speaking, it had been a decision I had agonized over but I couldn’t risk Shay or Alice, they deserved freedom. Alice the most innocent of all deserved the right to grow up in safety and love, not in this chaos. I turned away and cried myself to sleep silently, not wishing Edward to see.

The headache that followed the next morning was unkind especially in this heat, my head throbbed. The humidity only added to my discomfort and nausea. I dragged myself up, finding a clean rag to quickly remove the streaks of dried tears, and the newly formed sweat.

I dragged myself out cursing the sun as it brightly blazed in to my eyes, I lifted my arm to protect my pained eyes from the blinding light. I cast my eye to the bow, we had made good time. We were drawing toward land, I could only assume that we had reached our destination, all hands were on deck. I would have turned my head to look to Edward but the pain in my head made me believe it was not worth pressing myself. So instead I slowly turned to the stern making my way toward the starboard quarter, walking up the few steps cautiously. I turned to see Edward steering us toward land and Anne relaying orders vocally which hurt my delicate senses. “Alicia,” Edward called, “we have finally reached our destination.” He seemed hopeful.

I did not share his new found sense of hope. I felt nausea and I knew it went beyond the effects of the rum, my stomach ached with the knowledge of what I was to do. I gazed down at the state of my clothes and how ill equipped I was to step foot upon the island. I nodded to both Edward, then Anne. I took back into the captain’s cabin, sought out water of which there was precious little but it was enough to wet my dry throat and slake my thirst for the time being. I would again have to don clothes not my own, finding a belt I could pull tight enough to make the clothes fit well enough. A small bag over my shoulder should I need to carry anything, and a small blade fixed under my belt. I felt a little worse for wear but it wasn’t anything I couldn’t handle, it did however lead me to miss my modern conveniences which could take away this throbbing in my head in a second.

When I returned to the deck I found Edward talking to Anne. I drew close enough to hear him telling her of the Templar's plans and how insidious they were, I knew this to be true, well for some of them. I scowled at the thought of Cole and all the deceit involved in getting me here. And now I would have to pull off a deception of my own.

A shimmer caught my eye forcing me to squint. I turned to see what had caused it to focus slowly to what looked like a skull in Edward’s palm, it was a jarring image until I realized that must be the artifact. It was a strange artifact indeed, as it was the shape of a man’s skull yet clear like glass. How would I manage to take this away from him without him knowing? Before I got the chance to construct an elaborate plan he was readying himself to disembark, I followed after him. He stopped me in my tracks with a firm hand upon my shoulder, "You have suffered enough. It is safer for you to remain here lass."

"Edward, you need someone watching your back,” I stressed hoping he would look to me.

"I can do that," Anne chimed.

I felt a mild annoyance growing; I had to get off this ship. "Anne, you’re the quartermaster the ship is your charge. Edward I need to walk land, I have been a prisoner for too long.”

I was playing upon his conscience and his fondness for me, I felt pained to do so but I couldn’t fail in this. So begrudgingly Edward agreed. "Stay close to me. This jungle is full of dangers," he pressed.

I nodded. Following after Edward, at first I was only a step behind, but soon we were in step with each other. I looked toward the jungle before us, and a sense of shame grew in knowing that one of the dangers in this jungle was standing at his side feigning a smile, gaining his trust.
Alicia moves forward with her plan

The heat seemed to become oppressive as we drew deeper into the jungle and it was difficult to focus as there was an array of animals calling in the trees and brush. The less deadly animals were loud and visible, but it was the silent hidden predators I was concerned about. I feared I wouldn’t hear the low hiss of the snakes hiding in the trees or spot the stalking Panthers before it was too late. I kept as close to Edward as I could and somehow ending up in my panic clinging to his arm. He smiled in what looked like a reassuring manner, “Don’t worry love, I won’t let any harm come to you.”

That statement cut through me, he was promising to protect me while was sharpening a blade ready for his back. While Edward kept a keen eye out for danger, it was with a heavy heart that I began searching for anything that might allow me to steal that skull. To my horror, it was not hard to find skulls, as they littered the jungle ground like a warning to its dangers. I took a shaky hand to one, wondering what had befallen this poor soul. Whoever they had been in life, now in death they would now serve an ill purpose, and the knowledge of this led me to apologise to them in an effort to ease my conscience. The poor soul's skull was pushed into my own knapsack so Edward wouldn't question my new acquisition. I looked to the bright skull with Edward’s bag upon his hip and knew this would be a match in weight and shape but not appearance, so I would have to ensure he did not think to look at it as we cut our way through this humid jungle. The brush was thick and visibility was low. Sweat was trickling down my back and temples. There was no relief from this damn heat. I squeezed Edward's arm and pressed, “I need to stop a moment the heat is getting to me.”

He stopped and fished his hand into the bag pulling free a canteen, he passed it to me. “This will help. We cannot stop long, as it is not safe to do so and time is of the essence.”

I was undeserving of his kindness or concern. I could not hold his gaze as the shame made it difficult to see the gentleness in his eyes, as he may be a pirate but he was also a good man. I did not care to think what that made me, such thoughts would hold me in place and then I would never get to hold my daughter again. I leant my head against a tree and closed my eyes for a moment, listening to the jungle thriving with life. The birds and monkeys gentle chatter was rather soothing once you became accustomed to it. My reverie was broken when I heard Edward hiss, “Don’t move.”

I became rigid and afraid to move a muscle. My eyes flashed open, widened and locked on his. His eyes were upon my shoulder. I wanted to scream when I felt cold rough skin brush against mine, whatever it was it was moving just out of my sight. In a way, I was glad I couldn’t see it as I imagine if I could I would have been overwhelmed with the panic rising within me. Edward’s hand seemed to move with speed a precision as he pulled away what I could now see was a rather large snake. He threw it some distance. I sighed with relief, safe and free of the unwanted guest but I was still uneasy about the intrusion upon my person. As I shook off of the ill feeling I embraced Edward and breathed a genuine, “Thank you.”

I pulled back slightly but not releasing my grip upon his waist and looked up at him. He grinned and remarked, “I did say I wouldn’t let any harm come to you.”

I held him there just looking up at him with a wry smile, as I had an agenda for keeping him so close. There was no other way to gain access to his bag I told myself. His brow raised quizzically after our embrace lasted longer, “Not that I am not enjoying being so close but…”

I couldn’t let him finish that thought, this was my only chance. In a swift motion, I did the only thing I could think that might keep him close and took my lips to his. For a moment my lips were met with stillness and it was in that split second I thought ‘what am I doing? Poor Shay. Poor Edward. Damn Cole and Damn me’ I should have pulled away then, Edward gave me more than enough time to pull back and call it a mistake in the heat of the moment but I didn’t. And when he returned my kiss everything became hazy as his soft lips began to caress mine gently. His hands took around my waist and pulled me closer. My focus upon my mission faded as the feel of his body against mine stirred urges for more. He must have felt it to as his lips pressed more urgently to mine. I moaned softly as his fingers slid under my shirt and slid up my back. His fingers tracing my skin sent a pleasurable
shiver through my body. The warmth in my core spread, the heat off him was as intoxicating as was the salty and musky smell of him. His low growl and grind of his hips started that familiar throbbing between my legs. He broke the kiss breathless and took his lips to my neck. I tried to steady my breath and regain my bearings but his gentle nip at the nape of my neck made me crave him. I needed more. I was aware enough to be ashamed of it but not enough to stop.

It was Edward who had the will to put a stop to the growing desire. “Wait,” he gasped. “This is not the place.” He growled and looked to me his eyes darkened. He took a deep breath and slowly pulled his hands free of me, breaking from my grip.

While he had a moment of confusion I was regaining my senses so I seized my opportunity, putting his canteen back in his bag and swiping the skull and replacing it with the skull of some poor victim of this place. I was amazed he didn’t notice or feel what I thought were fumbling’s. My hands didn’t stop shaking the whole time. I feared he would catch me in the act but he hadn’t and that only made me feel worse, as he obviously trusted me. The skull now safely on my person and I could only hope he did not wish to look upon it before we reached the observatory.

It seemed as he had been lost in thought until he turned to me. He appeared a little wistful, “I know this must be confusing for you but I want to get you back to your family...not take advantage.”

My eyes widened. ‘Why was he the one feeling guilty? The shame was mine alone, so I assured him, “Edward you didn’t. I got caught up in the moment. I am sorry.”

I looked to the jungle floor, sighed heavily. Unbidden tears filled my eyes and coursed my cheeks. ‘I was now a thief and a cheat’ I hated myself.

“Hey,” Edward stated as his hand took under my chin. “what’s brought on these tears? I am not that bad of a kisser am I?” He grinned as if trying to lighten the mood.

“No, if only,” I forced a smile. “What kind of wife am I? My family is in hostile hands and I’m...” I couldn’t bring myself to finish that sentence.

“You got caught up in the moment. It happens to the best of us,” he tried to assure me but the shame rendered me silent. “We need to move.”

I followed on in silence, not wanting to think of the consequences of all of my actions not just upon those I loved but upon those in time in would affect. There was no way of knowing how far reaching any change would be.

Edward held up his hand as if calling me to halt silently. I stopped and awaited his word to continue. His hand quickly took to the pistol in his holster and a single shot rang out. As that shot rang out the jungle fell silent and all you could hear was the thud of a body hitting the ground. I surveyed the area and wondered how on earth Edward had seen anyone in this dense brush. It was an amazing feat and the marksmanship was effortless. He turned and waved for me to follow on. “Wow,” I gasped in amazement.

“What?”

“That was quite the feat.”

There was that damned smile again, a wolfish grin that made him so alluring. I had to shake my head and remind myself that he may be handsome and charming but I couldn’t let that make me lose my senses as I had too much to lose. Shay and I had no secrets, so I would have to tell him of this and dare not imagine the look of hurt on his face, as it would tear me up inside. I may lose him and I deserved to but he deserved to live on and find happiness elsewhere, and my daughter, I would hold her again. I must have been quite lost in my dark thoughts as I walked smack into the back of Edward and he turned and looked at me, “keep your wits about you love. I need you to watch my back,” he chided.
He was right, so I worked hard to hold my focus on getting safely through this dangerous maze before us. We had been walking unencumbered for some time when he asked, “Alicia?”

“Hmm?”

“I am curious. If I had not called a stop to that passionate embrace…would you?”

It felt strange to wonder whether I would have continued, and I didn’t really want to consider it. I hated myself enough, so I replied, “I don’t know.”

He seemed to look annoyed for a moment and he grumbled to himself. I ignored it as I didn’t want to consider the implications. All I had to do was get to that damn observatory and hand over the skull and this nightmare would be over, or at least I hoped so.
The choice

Chapter Summary

Alicia must finally make her choice, can she live with her decision?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The vast and long corridors of the temple were a breathtaking sight. It was strange how the design had elements that were both ancient and beyond this time. In fact, this tech had the look of some from my own time. Making this place all the more mysterious as it left me wondering how this was even possible but then again I was a time traveller displaced further and further into the past. Maybe we weren't the only civilization to master time travel. The possibilities and wonder of this place distracted me for a moment from the distasteful deed I would have to perform.

Once we reached the end of the corridor cries of pain and agony rang out resounding through the vast chamber ahead. A blinding light seemed to dissipate the man that had stood before us. I stood wide-eyed and frozen in place until the sight of that wall of energy faded and moved closer to where we stood. I gasped as the flash of heat was so oppressive and so close. Shaking I looked at Edward wide-eyed. I needed to follow his lead as he seemed calmer than myself before he exclaimed, "Run."

We raced forward as the field dissipated and reformed behind us. The field's distortion was loud and the closer it grew the louder it became. It hurt my ears to suffer it. I was thankful for the sound to draw back with the moving field. We now stood on an edge looking to strange moving platforms. Edward navigated the platforms with grace while I stepped awkwardly forward nearly falling flat on several occasions. Edward took my hand and steadied my ascent. I smiled up at him. There was quite leap forward to the next platform. I had no chance of making such a jump. The fear of falling hampered my ability to move. Edward leapt over and pulled himself up with ease leaving me looking on in horror. It would possibly be ironic or even deserved if I fell to my death, it would save everyone so much grief and for a moment I truly contemplated that edge and the dark depths below. I was almost mesmerized by the darkness of the shadow hiding the ground from view. I wondered how far I would fall before I met my end. Edwards' voice drew me from my dark reverie. "Alicia, jump over I will catch you."

A mild scepticism led my eyes to narrow upon him but I was the only ones whose motives were in question. I hung my head in shame and I could only hope Edward would assume fear was all that drew my eyes down. I finally glanced up and took a deep breath and took a few shaky steps back to give myself a running start. I had to time this right as alike the other platforms it was moving. Steeling my nerve I looked up at Edward and nodded. I charged forward with a clumsy leap. Edward caught my hand and managed to pull me into the safety of his arms. My heart was pounding heavily in my chest. I was still shaking as he assured me, "You're safe."

A voice and heavy footsteps behind us broke his warm comforting embrace as we turned to face two men in Spanish military colours. The bright yellow made them stand out clearly in the dim light within the cavern. They charged one diving at Edward perhaps in the hopes of forcing him over the edge. The second pulled a sword free and began a slow approach toward me. I only had a small dagger and it was no match for the range of a blade. I was aware I had little room to manoeuvre. There was nowhere to run to or back up to. So I stood my ground and evaded his first swipe, tightening my jaw as I wobbled slightly on my feet. I had no idea what to do next but all I heard was two long cries ring out and slowly fade away. I opened my eyes thankful to see Edward standing before me. "Thank you," I gasped.

He had saved me so many times and still I was set upon my path of deception. I couldn't let my family down. But as I looked up I realised that the way across would be no easy feat, if at all possible. There were moving platforms reaching up so high that all it would take was one slip to disappear forever into the abyss below. I gulped thinking I wouldn't have the strength or energy to scale these precarious heights that jump had been frightening enough. But with Edwards help somehow we managed to make it across safely. It had passed in a blur of fearful steps, leaps and cries of, "please don't let me fall."

I had never realised how comforting it was to have solid ground beneath your feet. My legs were still shaky from the climbing and many leaps of faith. It was difficult to steady my breath after such climb and leap at the end. It had been terrifying when the last platform had seemed to give way but I had ungracefully stumbled down on to the end platform thankful to be alive. But I also knew what I would have to do next was just as horrifying but in a different manner. I followed
after Edward on unsteady legs but I managed to push forward. We found ourselves in a wider cavern. The dangerous fields flared to life around a group of six Spanish guards who seemed ready to move forth until an older man stepped to the front of the group. He had the look of a man of means. His white hair and beard trimmed, not a hair out of place. His wrinkles were deep and his countenance that of a serious man. He wore darker colours but his clothing was more lavish and frilled than the soldiers about him as if to show himself as a man of higher station. He looked at me and seemed to have a look of recognition but we had never met before. He remarked, "Do you have what I seek?"

This must be the Templar contact Cole spoke of. I had no idea how he had got such information to him but I swallowed thickly as I knew this was the moment I had to reveal myself as a traitor to Edward. With a heavy heart, I walked slowly forward. With each new step, my legs seemed to become heavier and more rigid. The weight bearing on my conscience made this whole horrific moment seem as if it ran in slow motion. Each moment felt so drawn out and exhausting. With each step, I pushed the blade a little deeper into Edward's back. I couldn't bring myself to look at Edward as the look of betrayal or fury would break my heart or lead me to change my mind. My eyes focused on the ground before me until I found myself before the Templar I was to hand the skull to. I had no idea of what this would do to the future and if it would be worth returning to, the only thing that made my hand pull the skull free of my satchel was the thought of Shay and my daughter Alice. So desperate to see them again it seems I would do anything for the chance.

"Alicia, do you have any idea what you've done?" Edward cried.

Tears pricked the corners of my eyes as I knew the depth of deception but I had no idea what the ramifications would be. "She has done the right thing. Would you escort the lady out? I do not wish her to witness this."

I froze in place and found myself pressing, "Witness what?"

"You can't be this naïve? What did you think would happen?" The older Templar remarked in a condescending tone as I was a fool.

But I was a fool. "I didn't think," I confessed.

I was still too ashamed to look at Edward but I couldn't leave him to this fate. Dragging myself free of the Spanish soldier's grip, it was as if my feet had a mind of their own as they motioned me back toward Edward. I heard a gunshot ring out and with panic, I looked to Edward his eyes were wide and fixed upon me with what looked like horror. He didn't look hurt. I would have breathed a sigh of relief but a strange agony cut through me stealing my breath which led my eyes to drop and see the crimson pool forming upon my shirt. I staggered finding myself upon the ground and I could only hear a cacophony of screams and gunshots ring about me. Motionless I lay unaware of what was occurring about me, the only thing I knew was the overwhelming pain made it hard to breathe. I held a hand to my stomach feeling the warmth and tackiness of my own blood was a strange and frightening feeling, as I pressed my hand in place hoping to stem the tide of blood escaping I gasped as a sharp pain cut through me.

Was I dying? I didn't want to die. I wasn't ready.

The pain brought forth waves of nausea. I had never faced my own mortality until this moment and I wasn't sure what I believed would happen after death. Fear brought forth fresh tears and they flowed freely down the sides of my temples. My eyes rolled back and I had to fight to keep them open with each fresh wave of agony. The pain was draining as my hand pressing to my stomach had been taking all my might and now it was becoming hard to focus on anything but the pain, my hand slipped and the wound bled and coated my limp hand in my lifeblood.

Why was the pain and the world around me becoming so dull?

Terrified I had to focus on the world slipping from me. It was as if my senses were all failing me but I did hear a final shot ring out though it sounded so distant. Then the only audible sound was lone soft footsteps and the weak echo of the distortion fields. I was so glad to hear Edward chide, "You fool, why did you do that?"
I strained to focus on Edward beside me on his knees. I turned to him slowly. Despite the pain, I gripped his arm tightly and pleaded, "Forgive me. Please forgive me. I was so desperate to see my family again that I was willing to let you pay the price."

It was becoming increasingly difficult to breathe and find the strength to continue holding to Edward but I needed to look up at him and feel the strain in my fingers about his shoulder as this let me know I was still alive. His eyes seemed sorrowful, "Hold on, I can get help."

I closed my eyes letting fresh tears flow free. I sobbed, "It is too late Edward. Maybe... I deserve such an end."

"Do not be a fool, your motivations I understand. I am sorry that your daughter must grow up without her mother."

"Alice, I barely got to hold her. I hope she knows I love her," I strained as the panic renewed within me.

"I am sure your husband will let her know."

I knew Edward was right, Alice if she truly existed in the future ahead she was in good hands, it was the only comforting thought that crossed my panicked ridden mind, as I was so unsure of what I believed in and where the end would take me.

*Would I be damned for my actions and would the future suffer greatly from my meddling?*

I could no longer see Edward clearly. I felt as if the world was fading away and I gasped with a final breath, "I am sorry."

Chapter End Notes

There may be an epilogue to follow from Shay's POV
Chapter Summary

Shay explains the events that followed after he his escaped with his daughter.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

In the protracted silence that followed Cole’s last order for my wife to report to him sent a chill down my spine, a sinking feeling within me told me the worst had happened. Alicia wouldn’t be coming home; she would never see Alice again. It was hard to breath but I knew I had to fight for our way out now, while they were distracted by the mission being a failure. That was how they described my love’s death. I knew my first impulse should have been to spirit Alice to safety, but the soul crushing agony drove me to a madness unlike any other, in the grips of this frenzy I beat Cole within an inch of life, and left him in that sorry state. I did the same for his lackeys. Storming out of there babe in my arms, shielding her as I ran. I cannot be sure how I found the speed and strength to escape but I found myself on the shore looking toward the Morrigan once more. There had been moments where I thought I would never set eyes upon her, never mind to sail upon her once more, but there she was. Free at last, that deep breath was cold and hollow as something, someone was missing. I longed for her fingers to lace with mine and tell me this had been some crazed nightmare ‘you’re being foolish’ I swear I heard her voice but my hand only felt the chill in the air and my eyes only saw an empty space beside me. I could have spent hours staring into the emptiness but I had another to think of now, my Alice.

Alice was often the only thing that brought me back from the brink, holding her grounded me, but made me miss my Alicia more as she had her eyes and they were always on me. I decided to travel to New York to visit Haytham, as I knew he needed to know and this news wasn’t to be passed on coldly in a letter. And there was also the matter of my future with the order now that I was a single father, as I had still been playing a small role during my time with Alicia. She would never have allowed me to stop as she knew I believed in the cause as much as she did, so despite her fears, she would kiss me goodbye and always say, “Come back to me.”

That memory forced my hand to take over my mouth as a wave of emotion threatened to take me, the memory of her smile let the tears flow freely from my pained eyes. My throat burned and tightness formed choking me up.

‘Damn, why didn’t you come back to me? You always made me promise.’ I pleaded to the ether as if hoping she would hear me. But that eerie silence was all reined.

There were nights when I dreamt I was walking through a crowd, and I would see her face. My heart would leap and I would race after her but I never caught up with her, as she was always just out of reach. I would wake in a cold sweat calling after her. Despite the pain that cut through me a strange feeling lingered, maybe she was alive somewhere, just out of reach. I don’t know why but that thought comforted me.

Alice had loved being aboard the Morrigan, which was a godsend, I thought she would be a handful. She was quiet and often smiled as the ship swayed, the motion must have calmed her. And despite not having the proper milk she was strong and healthy, she had her mother’s will and those damn eyes.

The sea shanties became her lullabies and they managed to soothe her despite the key of my voice. It always lifted my spirits to sing to her, as seeing her little smile filled me with a love I didn’t know I was capable of. In a painful contrast, the grief I suffered for losing my Alicia was agony I never knew I could feel. The world felt just a little colder and emptier without her in it.

Reaching New York, I made my way to the tavern that I had been told was the current Templar base by my contacts. I looked around, and found Haytham upstairs surrounded by other Templars, he looked lost. I wondered how to break the news to him, as I barely believed it was real myself. Alicia was gone. No matter how many times I was given this cruel reminder in didn’t truly sink in.

I walked up slowly, trying my best to shield Alice from the racket but god love her she didn’t stir. I would have left her with someone, but I didn’t want to be apart from her, and I knew Alicia would like Haytham to be an influence upon our daughter. The group fell silent upon my approach; Haytham looked up and looked confused for a moment before a curious look crossed his face.

“Shay? What brings you to us? And who is this?” He smiled gently upon seeing Alice.

I looked sullenly at him, sighing heavily. “I don’t know how to say this…Alicia is dead”

It still didn’t sound real or feel real, and I hated Cole for taking her last moments from me. I hoped he suffered for all he had done to us. Haytham stood motionless, and then he demanded, “Leave us”

The other Templars seemed to make haste in departing us. Haytham took a seat at the table, dropping his head into his arms, I could see him shaking. He heaved. After a time he lifted his head. He had not be prepared for him to be so open with his pain, it was both humbling and awkward to witness. I rocked Alice, she was so peaceful, and she slept through the whole ordeal. I thought it best to give Haytham time alone to take in this awful news.
After a time he came over to me, we spoke of the peace, and the connections Alicia had helped Haytham foster. Haytham told me he wished to do all he could for me, and Alice.

I couldn't deny in the years since he has been good to Alice, she refers to him as uncle Haytham, and that title often brings a tear to his eye, not that either of us spoke of such things. For a time there was peace between the Templars and Assassins, sadly paranoia and desperation for power on both sides led this to crumble although Haytham and I never stopped trying to keep the peace. When it failed we did all we could to strive for some kind of balance.

Alice is very much like her mother. I never stopped thinking of Alicia, it saddened me to think of the life we could have had. But Alice is coming on in leaps and bounds, her mother would be proud. I need not worry about what type of woman she will become, as, after all, she has her father's wit, and her mothers will.

Chapter End Notes

Cole's fate -

Alicia’s effects upon history could never be truly known as the books rewrote themselves and only one man knew the truth but he cared little. Cole survived his severe injuries as luck does not always fall upon the deserving, and he managed to make his way back to his time. Wearily he returned to his office, amazed it was still there and the only words he uttered to mark the ordeal were, “This went better than the first one, third time lucky I guess.”

If he felt any remorse or care for the pain, and the damage he caused he never showed it, as he began to look for his next target to draw into this desperate bid for power. To fulfill a supposed destiny he believed he had.

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